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Nick Carter Stories

THE JEWELS OF
WAT CHANG

OR Nick Carter and the Avenger



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THE JEWELS OF WAT CHANG; Or, NICK CARTER AND THE AVENGER.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE MAN WHO KNEW.

"Keep your hands in your pockets, Beveridge."

"But——"

"Keep them there, I tell you!"

There was a sharper note in the voice of the square-shouldered, compactly built man, with the big beard, who, in his rather rough clothes, was the ideal Western horse dealer.

He stood just inside the door of a comfortable sitting room in a bungalow at Stonecrag-on-the-Hudson, with a pistol in his hand. It was leveled at the pale face of a lean, rather cadaverous man of about thirty-five, who leaned against the wall by the side of a wide, old-fashioned open fireplace.

It was obvious that the lean man had been sitting in front of the fire, smoking a cigarette, when the rather insistent horse dealer came in and broke up his meditations.

"I'll keep my hands in my pockets because you won't let me take them out," remarked the lean man, with a great pretence of being undisturbed. "But I should like to know who the devil you are, and what you are doing in my house at this time in the evening—or at any time, for that matter."

"You have seen me before. Therefore, it can't be hard for you to conjecture why I am here."

"I've seen you before, you say? When?"

"Look here, Asa Beveridge! It will pay you a great deal better to be straightforward," said the horse dealer. "I have the best of you, and you are quite aware of the fact."

"You mean your little friend in your right hand?"

The lean man nodded contemptuously toward the pistol, but was careful not to take his hands from his pockets.

"I was not referring to the pistol just then, Beveridge."

"My name is Shaw—Thomas Shaw!" snapped the other.

"At Stonecrag, you mean? Yes, I have heard that you are Mr. Shaw up here. But I knew you in Siam, and also in New York, as Asa Beveridge. You have chosen to call yourself Ralph Stanton——"

"Curse him!" suddenly broke out the lean man.

"If you like," agreed the horse dealer, smiling. "But why did you take his name when you tried to sell a large lot of extremely valuable rubies and diamonds found in mines in the Himalaya Valley? That was a strange performance, considering how you hate him."

"What do you want here?" demanded the man the other had called Asa Beveridge, but who had said his name was Thomas Shaw. "And how did you get in?"

"I want to talk to you. That's why I came," was the imperturbable reply. "I got here by walking in at the back door. It was unfastened."

"If it had not been, I suppose you would have come in just the same?" sneered the other.

"Most likely. But we'll stop that sort of argument, which will not get us anywhere, and I ask you, Asa Beveridge, where are the jewels that were stolen from the Great Pagoda at Bangkok, Wat Chang?"

"I don't understand you."

"Yes, you do. But I'll put it another way. Why were you mixed up with the notorious Loop Gang—formerly headed by a man called Red Clancy, but who was killed in Bangkok—in the robbery of the mines above Raheng, in Siam?"

"I was not mixed up in it. At least, I never got the stones."

The horse dealer dipped his pistol significantly.

"Keep your hands in your pockets, Beveridge! You can talk without gesticulating. You sold a few of the stones to one Samuel Potter, a well-known gem merchant of New York. You told him your name was Ralph Stanton."

Beveridge broke into a harsh laugh.

"It did not get Stanton into trouble," went on the horse dealer calmly. "But only because he has kept out of sight for the last two weeks. When we find him—as we shall—he will have to tell what he has done with the Great Pagoda jewels."

"What's that to me?"

"It will be the Tombs for you, if I choose to say the word," replied the horse dealer sternly.

"It will, eh? What for?"

"For being concerned in the robbery of nearly five million dollars' worth of diamonds, rubies, and emeralds, with other precious stones, from the mines of the King of Siam. I have already explained that."

"You have not explained how I stole them, nor shown that I did."

"You were trying to sell them to a fence in New York—a man named Jeremiah Johnson, who is now well on the way to a long prison sentence, and who was in this very house to see you two nights before he was arrested in his den in New York."

"Bosh!"

"You think it is bosh, do you?"

"Yes."

"Well, I shall show you that I have proof of everything I charge, Asa Beveridge. If I do not put you in the Tombs right away, it will be because you agree to help me find those jewels."

"I don't know anything about them," snarled Beveridge.

"I feel sure that you do. You know as much about them as I do, and I know who has possession of them at this moment."

"Why don't you go and get them, then?"

"Because I have not yet laid my hand on the man."

"If I am the man, as you seem to think, why don't you take me?" was the sneering rejoinder. "I am here. What I should like to know is, who are you?"

"That is soon answered."

As the horse dealer said this, he snatched the big beard and mustache from his face.

Asa Beveridge started back in astonishment.

"Nick Carter!" he breathed.

"Exactly! Keep your hands in your pockets! I told you that before."

"Oh, if I took my hands from my pockets, I shouldn't do any harm with them," was the rejoinder. "You don't think I want to get into a scrap with Nick Carter, do you?"

"You were in one when we raided Jeremiah Johnson's place in New York two weeks ago, and got those stones taken from the jungle mines."

"No, I wasn't," came in quick denial. "I jumped out of that place at the first chance I had. I saw there was a lot of fighting, but I also knew that the police would have the best of it in the end. I knew those three officers—Fenton, Starke, and Poliani—and I didn't want any mix-up with them."

Nick Carter smiled, as, still holding his pistol in his right hand, he stuffed his false beard and mustache into a side pocket with his left.

"You've told the truth there, Beveridge. And I know you did not steal those stones from the mines, for the simple reason that Jack Grantley—who calls himself Ralph Stanton—grabbed them all."

"Curse him!" growled Beveridge.

"You made that rather profane remark before," observed Nick Carter. "I have a proposition to make to you."

"A proposition? Do you mean something that will be to my advantage?"

"Keep your hands in your pockets, Beveridge! Yes, that is what I mean. That is why I came up here to-night."

"I thought you meant to arrest me for being at Jeremiah Johnson's the night of the raid."

"If that had been my object, I would have brought a couple of police headquarters detectives with me, and had them do the job," replied Nick. "I am willing to overlook your part in that affair, provided you help the law in this other case."

"I'm to be a stool pigeon, eh?" growled Beveridge.

"I should not call it that. But it is no consequence how you speak of it, provided you help me to gather in this fellow, Ralph Stanton, together with the jewels that I know he has stolen."

"What am I to do?"

"Keep your hands in your pockets, for one thing."

"Look here, Carter," blurted out Beveridge. "How am I to do any good with my hands stuck in my trousers pockets? What is the idea about that? Are you afraid I shall draw a gun on you?"

Nick Carter laughed.

"Not now, Beveridge!" he said. "At first, I didn't know exactly what you might do if your hands were free. Now I'll give you a chance. I am willing to let you take your hands out of your pockets if you promise not to try any treacherous move."

Asa Beveridge's dark eyes snapped, as he returned, with fine emphasis:

"I am on your side, Carter, if it is against that sneaking, murderous hound, Grantley. I'll get him for you, if I have to lose my life in the job."

"You won't lose your life, Beveridge," returned Nick. "And I don't want Grantley to lose his. What I do want is to get those jewels back for the King of Siam, and to see Grantley serve a few years in prison. It is the only safe place for a man of his stripe. Now, where is Grantley? Do you know?"

"Yes."

This prompt affirmative rather surprised Nick. He looked hard at Beveridge, as if to make sure that he knew what he was saying.

"Where is he?"

"I'll show you soon. I'll only say that I have a reason for wanting to have this man punished, which is altogether apart from his taking the Great Pagoda jewels—if he did take them."

"I know what your reason is, Beveridge," said the detective quietly. "Grantley stabbed you and left you for dead in the jungle. I did what I could for you. But I lost sight of you afterward, until I came across you in New York."

"I have always been grateful to you for practically saving my life up there in the woods above Raheng, Carter. But you are a detective, and I have been—well, on the other side! That has made it hard for me to show my appreciation."

"You can do it now, Beveridge. If you are honest and straight with me in this case, you will not lose anything by it. I promise you that. By the way, what be-

came of that big ape you made such a pet of in Siam? Did you give him away when you left?"

"You mean Sandow? That's what I called him. Look here!"

He uttered a peculiar whistle, and a great, powerful creature, whom Nick recognized at once as the ape he had seen in Siam in possession of Beveridge, bounded into the room and gravely held out one of its long paws to shake hands with its owner.

"I don't know what I should do without Sandow," declared Beveridge. "He is the most faithful friend I have. But now, Carter, you will sleep here to-night, won't you? I have several spare rooms."

"Thank you. I will."

So it came about that Nick Carter accepted hospitality from a man he had been chasing to put in prison only two weeks before.

But circumstances alter cases, and there were strange circumstances facing Nick Carter just now.

CHAPTER II.

REAL OR A SHADOW?

About the time that Nick was undressing for bed in the bungalow of Asa Beveridge, at Stonecrag, a fat, puffy man, who was known to his servants and the tradesmen of Stonecrag as Ralph Stanton, was sweeping up to his country home, only a few miles from Beveridge's bungalow, in a large touring car.

"Haven't seen any strangers about the place while I have been away, have you, Williams?" asked Stanton of his chauffeur.

"No," replied the saturnine Williams briefly.

"You would have seen them, if there had been?"

"Of course I would. There ain't anything goes on at Joy View—that is, outside the house—that I don't get a line on."

"I know that, Williams," returned Stanton, in a tone of relief. "Only, since those two fellows came up here and ransacked the library, I haven't felt quite easy."

"You mean that horseman-looking fellow and the young one who said he was chambermaid in a livery stable somewhere, more than two weeks ago?"

"Yes."

"They made me take them down to the station for New York, in the car. I have always thought they must have been on the same train as you."

"So they were. I found it out afterward, although I didn't suspect it at the time. Never say anything about that, Williams. Things happened that made it advisable for me to go away for a while, and I don't want anybody to know I am home. You understand?"

"Of course I do," said the chauffeur, as he stopped at the front door of the mansion, known as Joy View.

"Hello, Drumm!" called out Stanton to his butler, who had come out to receive the head of the house. "Any news?"

"All quiet, sir."

"Good!"

Ralph Stanton went to his bedroom at once, after telling Drumm to bring him Scotch whisky and a siphon.

For half an hour or so he sat in his comfortable bedroom, sipping his high ball and puffing at a cigar, and in a brown study.

Thinking over his adventures of the past year, he could

not help feeling that he was entitled to a little comfort and ease at the present moment.

But he was not getting it. In fact, he was in a state of worry just now that made him afraid of his own shadow.

"Siam is a dreadful country!" he muttered. "And I don't know whether it paid me, after all. All those stones from the mines are gone, and I am only a bluff as the owner of this place. If it came down to cues, I don't know whether I could show that I had a right to be here. What's the use of having a lot of stones that you are afraid to sell?"

He shrugged his shoulders impatiently. Then, seeing his glass was empty, he mixed another whisky and seltzer and relighted his cigar.

"I can't get that fellow, Asa Beveridge, out of my mind, either. Don't know why. I jabbed that knife into his back far enough to make sure he'd keep quiet for all time. I had to do it. It was him or me. Well, what have I to worry about?"

He went to bed soon afterward. Then the worry he had tried to toss aside before going to sleep came into his dreams.

All night he dreamed about Asa Beveridge and the long knife between his shoulder blades. It seemed as if the face of the dead man mocked him, no matter where he went or which way he looked.

When at last Stanton awoke with a start and passed his sleeve across his hot, wet forehead, he was panting as if he had been running up a long, steep hill.

His heart palpitated, and he had an awful feeling of crushing distress which he could not understand, but which was real enough to make him fall back on his pillow and groan aloud.

"Pshaw!" he ejaculated at last. "I'm as nervous as a kitten. Guess I'm tired. I've been jumping about from one town to another, and sleeping in strange beds, till I've lost my grip. I'll soon be all right if I stay up here quietly for a while."

He dressed with his usual care, after getting under the shower in his private bathroom, and when he strolled into the dining room for his solitary but very well-cooked and well-served breakfast he looked quite himself.

Drumm, who stood behind his chair, wished him a respectful "Good morning!" to which Stanton replied with a heartiness that seemed rather to astonish the domestic:

"Well, Drumm! It's a nice morning. I think I shall have to take a walk through the woods after breakfast. It's good to be home again."

"We are all glad to see you home, sir," replied Drumm, pouring out a cup of coffee for his employer, and then adding to it just the right proportions of sugar and cream. "It is always better when the master of a beautiful place like Joy View is about."

"I suppose so," laughed Stanton. "I'm regarded as the lord of the manor, eh?"

"Yes, sir," returned Drumm, quietly and respectfully. "You see, sir, I have lived in England a good part of my life. I was born there, if I may mention it. And in the places I lived as under footman and butler, we always felt like old retainers, and liked to regard the lord of the manor as something very much better than ordinary gentlemen, sir."

Ralph Stanton laughed still more heartily at this naïve confession. At the same time, secretly he liked to think

that he appeared as a lord of the manor to his servants. There was plenty of snobbism under the coarse surface of this puffy man.

Besides, there had been another manservant in the room to hear Drumm's remarks.

Having finished his breakfast, Stanton walked down the hall to the door of his library. He found it locked.

"Here, Drumm!" he called out.

"Yes, sir," answered Drumm's voice close behind him. "The key, sir? Yes, sir! Here it is."

Stanton unlocked the door and went in, closing the door after him.

"Kind of careful of things when I'm away!" he muttered. "That's the best of having well-trained servants about you. They come rather high—especially when they're English—but they are worth the money."

He looked at the safe against one wall of the library, and saw that the chain which held it to the wall—fastened to an iron upright girder in the plastering placed there to help in securing the safe—was intact.

"I reckon I did a good thing when I had this safe put in," he told himself, with a smile. "Safes are not much use as a general thing. But I am not afraid of anybody getting inside of this one."

He was about to turn the knob, to look inside, when he changed his mind and went to his large roll-top desk near one of the windows.

"I must get a lock for this desk," he said softly. "Not that I ever keep anything of importance here. Still, I like to have things locked, because then——"

He had flung up the lid as he soliloquized, looking out of a window at the waving treetops the while.

Now he allowed his glance to drop, and, with a shriek of deadly terror, fell back, supporting himself with one hand on the heavy library chair.

"Great heavens! What's that?"

His dry lips could hardly form the words, as he looked, with distended eyes, at the interior of the desk.

There it was! Lying in the very center of the clean white blotting pad which had been put there by the attentive Drumm, weeks before—although it had never been used—was a long, rough-looking knife!

It was a dagger, of foreign design. The blade was stained a rusty red!

At first, Stanton believed his senses were leaving him, and that he was repeating, in his waking hours, a vision that had disturbed him almost continuously in his sleep.

"It—looks—like my—my—knife!"

Slowly he stretched out his hand. Would he feel it as a real thing, or would it vanish into thin air as he tried to touch the horrible, bloodstained thing?

Inch by inch, his hand crept along the blotting pad, while his dilated eyes followed his hand.

He was half hoping, half fearing, that the implement would vanish as he came nearer.

When his fingers were less than an inch from the handle he stopped to draw a deep breath.

"I feel as if I dare not go any farther!" he whispered.

Then, with a desperate effort to control himself, he let his hand fall upon the haft of the dagger.

"Save me!" he murmured.

The knife was tangible. It was a real thing. His imagination had not carried him far enough to see a dagger that was not there.

Perhaps Ralph Stanton had been thinking, in a misty way, of the dagger that Macbeth fancied he saw outside the death chamber of King Duncan.

Like many men who care for nothing decent in this world, he was not without superstition, and he delighted in ghost stories, both in books and on the stage, so that the experience of Macbeth was familiar to him.

Whatever he may have thought of beforehand, however, certain it is that he was convinced now of the solidity of the murderous knife lying on his clean blotting pad.

His fingers shrunk from the handle of the dagger. He took hold of it by the point of the blade, drawing the weapon slowly toward him, so that he could bend his fascinated gaze closer upon it and confirm a suspicion he already entertained.

"Yes," he muttered. "It is the same knife! It is *mine*!"

There was no doubt about it. Here, in his desk, in his private library, which had been locked, with the key in possession of a servant whom he had every reason to trust, was the dagger that he had driven into the back of Asa Beveridge in the jungle above Raheng, in Siam, months before.

It had seemed then as if Beveridge would never move again, because if he had by any chance recovered from the knife stab, there was a great boa constrictor just above, ready to crush him to a pulp.

"I must be dreaming, or else I'm going nutty!" he mumbled. "This thing is impossible."

He reached for the knife again, took the handle in his hand, and felt that it fitted into his grasp as he remembered it to have done many times in the past.

"There's no mistake!" he broke out, aloud, while the perspiration stood out all over his flabby face. "It's mine! Mine! Here, in New York! After being left in Siam, sticking in a man's— Oh!"

With a gasp, he dropped the knife back on the desk, and, staggering backward, fell at full length across the library floor.

Ralph Stanton had not been lying thus, insensible, for more than a minute, when one of the large windows was noiselessly pushed up, and there came in a great hairy creature of a reddish tinge, who squatted on the floor, for a moment just inside the window, chattering queerly the while.

Its little twinkling black eyes suddenly rested on the prostrate man, and it bounded over to Stanton's side.

For a second it seemed as if the animal would bury its clawlike fingers in the throat of the unconscious man. But it didn't.

Instead, it straightened up abruptly, pounced on the knife, and with a hiss, darted to the window, leaped out, and swung off through the trees.

Some fifty yards away, it stopped under a great leafy oak. Then, with a whine, it reached up with its long arms and climbed into the branches.

Sitting there—each with a pair of strong field glasses in his hand—were two men, who had been intently studying what took place in the library of Joy View.

One of the men was Asa Beveridge, the other Nick Carter!

Both looked curiously at the creature with the knife. It was Sandow, Beveridge's pet ape.

CHAPTER III.

A SISTER IN THE CASE.

"Give that to me!" commanded Beveridge sharply, as he held out his hand to the ape.

Sadow only chattered and held the knife tighter.

His master snatched the knife from the animal, and gave it a light tap of reproof on the side of its head.

The ape showed plainly that it was depressed by the rebuke, and Beveridge had to speak kindly to it, as he stroked the animal's head, to bring him around.

"Go, Sadow! You shall have some sugar to-night for this."

He swung his arm out peremptorily, and Sadow knew what the gesture meant, especially as it was accompanied by another sharp "Go!"

"Now, Carter," said Beveridge, as the two men easily swung themselves to the ground. "I've done what I said I would about Grantley—or Stanton. I hope you will let me put it through to the very end."

"What do you want to do?" asked the detective.

"I want to drive him to the verge of insanity, if not quite crazy," was the savage reply. "He thought he had killed me in that Siamese jungle, and I have let him think so."

"Why?"

"So that my revenge can be all the harder when I am ready. It has been my aim to make him think himself safe from me, but always to keep him agitated over other things."

"You must hate him!" said Nick.

"Hate him?" repeated Beveridge. "How would you feel if you had been treated as he has treated me?"

The detective shrugged his shoulders. He preferred not to answer such a question.

"He was my partner in that mine game. I put him on to it. I'll confess that now. Why shouldn't I? It is a closed incident, and you won't take advantage of any of my confidences."

"You have my word," was Nick's quiet reminder.

"That's so. I haven't forgotten. But about this Stanton—for it is easier to call him by the name he has used for so long. He did the worst thing he could to a partner."

"Stabbed you in the back?"

"Yes. But not only that. He tried to steal from me my share of the stones I had labored for so hard. It is true the King of Siam claims all the stones found in his dominion. I don't know that he has any right to them. But he has the power, and that is enough."

"That's true. Well, go on, Beveridge."

"When Stanton couldn't get away from me in any way, then it was that he took an opportunity to give me what he thought was a finishing touch with this knife. If it hadn't been for you helping me as you did, I dare say I should have died."

"Perhaps not. You seem to have a strong constitution and mighty healing flesh," laughed Nick. "However, Stanton meant to kill you, beyond all question, and your desire for revenge is very human, even if it is not altogether Scriptural. Only—mark this, Beveridge—we must not let this fellow get away just because you want vengeance."

"No fear. We have him now," returned Asa. "He can't get away. Let us get back to the bungalow. I want you to meet my sister, Edith. She was to come this morn-

ing on that nine-o'clock train, and it is now past ten. She ought to be up there by this time."

"Is your sister acquainted with this man Stanton—or Grantley?"

"She knows him by both names," returned Beveridge. "But she does not know what he is. I mean, she is not aware of the fact that he is a professional crook."

"How's that?"

"Well, you see, Carter, my sister has always lived with an aunt in New York, and she thinks I am a square business man, with offices in one of the downtown skyscrapers. She knows I deal in diamonds and rubies, but she does not know how they come into my hands."

"That looks as if there is some good in you, Beveridge," remarked Nick, turning to look into the deep-set eyes of the lean, rather wild-looking individual by his side.

The two had walked from the oak tree, and were tramping steadily through the woods in the direction of the bungalow.

"I hope there is, Mr. Carter. I don't pretend that I've led an honest life altogether. But I do say that I have never been treacherous. When I have had a partner, I've given him a square deal every time. That is why I am so determined to make Stanton pay for what he did to me, as well as by giving up all the gems he managed to get in Siam."

"Your sister is coming up to spend a short time at the bungalow, as a change from city life, eh?" asked the detective.

"I don't know. I got a letter from her yesterday. All she said was that she wanted a rest from her work in New York. She is cashier in a wholesale importing house downtown. But she added something to the letter that I have not been able to figure out exactly."

"What was that, if I may ask?"

"She said she was coming to help her brother in a matter that had been troubling her for some time."

The two strode on in silence for the remainder of the distance. Each was occupied with his own thoughts.

Nick was wishing there had not been this knife episode to interfere with what otherwise would have been a perfectly plain and straightforward piece of work for him.

"I could have grabbed Grantley, examined his safe, and perhaps have recovered all the Wat Chang jewels without having to spend more than a few days on the case," he muttered. "As it is, I have to stand aside to let Beveridge work out the scheme he has planned."

His ruminations were broken by a clear, girlish voice shouting from the porch of the picturesque bungalow:

"Hello, Asa! Here I am!"

She was a beautiful girl. That could not be denied.

Her features were clear-cut, her eyes of a deep, sapphire blue, and her golden-brown hair hung above her white, broad forehead in bewitching tendrils that Nick Carter was obliged to confess to himself might easily entangle the heart of any ordinarily impressionable young man.

She acknowledged her brother's introduction of the detective with a graceful bow. Then she put out a small white hand with a frank gesture, as she said, smiling:

"Everybody knows Mr. Nicholas Carter—by reputation, even if not personally. I am very pleased to have an opportunity to speak to you, Mr. Carter."

Asa Beveridge and his sister evidently had confidential matters to speak of. So Nick retired to the other

end of the long porch, and, lighting a cigar, sat down to enjoy his smoke and to think over the strange conditions that had arisen in this case.

He had promised Señor Ribiero, the confidential agent of the King of Siam, and who was still in New York, that he would make a powerful effort to regain possession of the priceless jewels which had been stolen from the Great Pagoda in Bangkok, Wat Chang.

There was no absolute proof that Ralph Stanton had them. On the other hand, it was quite certain that that estimable person knew something about their whereabouts.

It was Nick Carter's custom, when he was sure of his ground, or nearly so, to go ahead without turning to right or left, until he reached his goal.

He had a way of taking some things for granted, it is true. But it was so seldom that he turned out to be mistaken, that his percentage of disappointment became practically negligible.

He felt that the ground was rather cut from beneath his feet, now that he had promised to let Asa Beveridge work out his vengeance while going after the jewels. But, certainly, he could not have found out so much as Asa had told him without spending more time than he cared to on the case.

"It is better as it is, no doubt," was his final conclusion, as he knocked the ashes from his cigar, and—

"Carter!"

It was Beveridge speaking. He was walking along the porch, with his sister by his side.

"Yes," returned the detective, getting up from his chair.

"My sister wants to say something."

"I shall be pleased to hear anything she may care to say," smiled Nick. "I am quite sure of that."

Famous detective as he was, Nick Carter did not pretend to be proof against all feminine charms. This girl was remarkably attractive, and there was an intelligence an honesty in her beautiful face that made her downright fascinating.

"My brother Asa was nearly killed in Siam," she began, plunging into the very middle of what she had to say.

"I have heard so."

"Heard so, Mr. Carter?" burst out Edith Beveridge impetuously. "Of course you have. You saved him from a horrible death. I am his sister, and I thank you from the bottom of my soul."

She held out one of those soft, white hands of hers, and Nick Carter could not do less than take it in his own with an appreciative pressure.

"He looks very well now, doesn't he?" was all he could think to say.

"Not very," returned Edith, with a critical look at her brother. "He is worried, and he shows it."

"Get to the point, Edith," threw in Beveridge impatiently.

"It is just this, Mr. Carter," resumed the girl. "I know all about what happened in Siam—"

"About the way Stanton tried to kill me, and about his having been concerned in the robbery of the Great Pagoda in Bangkok," interrupted Beveridge hastily.

"Yes," went on Edith. "It seems that this man, Ralph Stanton, has actually been a thief."

"I am afraid so," admitted Nick.

"And he had the insolence to go into partnership with a perfectly honest gentleman like my brother Asa."

Asa Beveridge was behind his sister. He shook his head hard at the detective, as if to warn him not to say anything that would change her belief with regard to himself.

"I want to take a hand in capturing Ralph Stanton. He nearly took my brother from me. He would have done so but for you, Mr. Carter. Asa is all I have in this world, except my Aunt Jane, and she isn't as much to me as Asa. You couldn't expect she would be, you know," she added, looking rather wistfully into the detective's face. "Now, could you? He is my brother, remember."

"Your feeling is entirely natural," returned Nick, who wondered what all this would lead to.

"Very well," she responded. "Then I want you to let me go my own way in punishing Stanton. Not only by causing his arrest, but in other ways that will make him realize there is an avenging power after him."

"I think your brother has already given him that kind of feeling," remarked Nick, with a quick glance at Asa.

"I hope he has. That is nothing to do with my own plans, however. I can carry them out myself. I only ask that you will not interfere if you should find that I am gradually bringing Stanton under subjection."

"You may need help," suggested Asa Beveridge.

"I don't think so."

"But if you should," put in Nick, "we must do what we can. We could not leave you to fight it out alone if the odds were clearly against you."

The girl stood, looking out into the thick wood and pondering, for several moments. Obviously, the possibility of her ever needing assistance had not occurred to her.

"Very well," she answered, at last. "I leave all that to your discretion. Now I'm going to see the cook and make sure we get a good luncheon. Both of you men are hungry. I can tell it by the look of you."

With a merry laugh, she ran into the house, and almost at once Asa Beveridge went in after her.

Hardly had they disappeared, when Nick caught the sound of footsteps on the dried leaves about the house, and the next moment his assistant, Chick, stood in front of him.

"I came on that train that got in a little while ago," explained Chick. "But I had to walk here, and it took me some time. It's all uphill, you know. I saw a very nice-looking girl get off the train. She came up the hill in a motor car that was waiting for her. I wonder who she was."

"I wonder," observed Nick. "I'm glad you came so quickly in response to my telegram, Chick. There will be work to do here, and you will have your full share of it, I think."

"What shall I do first?" asked Chick.

"Keep quiet, and I will introduce you to the pretty girl you saw at the train after a while."

Chick's face expressed so much interest that it was not necessary for him to speak. Nick answered his inquiring look.

"She is Edith Beveridge, the sister of Asa Beveridge," he said.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT HE SAW IN THE MIRROR.

Chick and Edith Beveridge soon became good friends, and the party of four was quite a merry one that day, especially in the afternoon and evening, when Edith played

and sang, and Nick Carter joined in with his strong and musical baritone.

The detective had not been in the bungalow all the time, however. He had strolled to the oak tree where he and Asa Beveridge had watched the ape coming from Ralph Stanton's library, and through his powerful field glasses had assured himself that Stanton was in the house, and, apparently, had no intention of leaving for the present.

That was all Nick cared to know just then. He was working up a plan to catch the rascal where he least expected it, and to get possession of the Great Pagoda jewels just when Stanton thought they were quite safe.

When Nick joined in the music in the evening he seemed not to have a care on his mind. Only Chick knew that when his chief seemed least disturbed was when his mind was most active.

It was not much after ten o'clock when Edith got up from the piano and bade them all good night.

"Hope you'll sleep well, Edith. You'll find it quieter here than in New York," laughed her brother. "At all events, the sounds you'll hear in the woods won't be the same as come across the court of an apartment house on Washington Heights."

"I am not afraid of anything disturbing my sleep," she replied lightly, as she waved her hand to the three men and disappeared.

"Rather sudden!" remarked Chick, in a tone of disappointment. "I was hoping she would sing one or two more songs before she went."

"My sister has her own ways," replied Beveridge. "There is no use in trying to make her do a thing if she has decided to do something else. She is inclined to go to bed now, so to bed she will go."

"I'm getting a little sleepy myself," confessed Chick, with a yawn. "How about you, chief?"

"We may as well get up to our room, unless Mr. Beveridge doesn't want to break up the party just yet."

"I'm ready to go," returned Beveridge. "This is a night when we can get to bed at a reasonable hour. It isn't always so."

It was an hour after the time when the party at Beveridge's bungalow retired to their respective bedrooms.

Nick Carter and his assistant had been accommodated with a double-bedded chamber at the front of the bungalow. Edith occupied a room somewhere at the back, while Beveridge slept in a small room downstairs that he had chosen for his sleeping chamber and den the first time he ever had visited the house.

Everything was quiet about the bungalow, and it might have been expected that the same story would be told of other homes scattered about the great mountain slope of Stonecrag.

But it was not so at Joy View. Ralph Stanton was awake, and occupied in an absorbing amusement in his library. He was examining a quantity of magnificent rubies and diamonds that he had spread out on the white blotting pad of his desk whereon had lain the blood-stained knife when he came home the night before.

Stanton had gradually got over his scare of the morning. He had persuaded himself that the knife was not his own, after all, and that it had been put there by some mischievous person with distorted ideas of what constituted a joke.

He had had a good dinner, with a bottle of champagne, and now, as he sat at his desk, with the door locked and

the jewels spread before him, he glanced up into the mirror that stood on top of his desk, and regarded his own bloated face with entire satisfaction.

"You look all right, Grantley," he muttered, apostrophizing his reflection. "There is nothing to show that you fear anybody. And, by Caesar, you don't! Why should you? You'll turn everything you have into cash as soon as it can be safely done, and then——"

He picked up a large forty-four caliber revolver that lay on his desk by the side of the stones, and smiled as he saw that every chamber held a cartridge.

As he put the revolver down, he looked behind him at the library door, with its heavy portières, which was squarely behind him.

"I'm pretty sure I locked that door," he muttered. "Still, I believe I'll go over there and look at it, to make quite sure. Since that knife business this morning, I don't seem to have quite such a grip on myself as I have generally."

He would have got up at once, only that he had drunk enough champagne to make him indolent.

He leaned back in his chair, contemplating the glittering gems before him, and falling into a pleasing reverie, in which he saw himself traveling about the world, always in luxury, and fluttering through the gay capitals of Europe without any cares, save to get the most out of the wealth he had at his command.

"It is worth a little trouble—and danger, to get all that," he muttered. "I'm not sorry."

He ran his fingers among the stones on the white blotter, and then, without thinking, raised his eyes again to the mirror on top of his desk.

"Merciful powers!"

Over his rubicund face there spread a chalky white, as if a cloud had suddenly come over him. His eyes were fixed upon the mirror, and his dry lips moved without uttering a sound.

"The mirror!" he gasped, under his breath, at last. "What is it? Am I going mad?"

It was not so very strange that he should ask himself this question.

He had supposed himself alone in the room, with the doors and windows all locked. The servants were in bed, and he alone was the wakeful person in the big mansion.

Yet, here, in the mirror——

"What can it be? And—and—I daren't turn around!"

There would have been no reason to turn around, anyhow. For what he saw in the glass must be behind him in solid substance.

What was it he saw?

Just this: Inside the door, framed by the heavy portières, a veiled face and a white-gloved hand, and in that hand, pointing with unerring certainty at his expansive back, a small, but spiteful-looking, automatic revolver.

"Is it, or do I only imagine it?" was the question that sang monotonously over and over again through his brain.

There was a gilt desk clock before him, and it ticked off a full minute without Ralph Stanton stirring, or any movement being noticeable in the white-gloved hand.

So intense was the silence, as he stared with all his might at that immovable reflection of the veiled face and arm, that each tick of the clock sounded like the thunder of a sledge hammer on a great beam of wood.

A change came at last. A minute passed. Then the

curtains were pushed aside, and the slim figure of a young girl came forth.

Her right hand, in its white glove, held the revolver steadily pointing at Stanton's back, and through her veil he could make out the glistening of her eyes.

She glided forward from the curtains, and at last stood close behind the terror-ridden man at the desk. The revolver had never shifted its aim for a second.

Once Ralph Stanton moved his head slightly as he looked down at the forty-four revolver on his desk. But the girl saw the movement, and instantly the muzzle of her automatic prodded him between the shoulder blades.

He jerked his head back to its former position, and as his eyes sought the mirror again, a cold shiver ran down his spine and made him tremble all over.

The girl spoke:

"Good evening, Mr. Stanton!"

"Good evening!"

His voice was ludicrously feeble, and in strong contrast to his usually sonorous tones. He thought the girl was smiling at him behind her veil.

Somehow his tongue would not leave the roof of his mouth, and his lips were so dry that they seemed to crack as he moved them to respond to the girl's mocking salutation.

"To—to what do I owe the honor of this visit?" he managed to add, still in that funny bleat.

"You think it is an honor?" she said cheerfully. "I am glad of that. Well, my primary reason for dropping in on you is to have a short conversation. After that I intend to deprive you of those stones which you seem to have in such large numbers."

"You're just a thief, eh?"

He snapped this at her with a vicious twist of his thick lips, and once more he looked down at his big revolver.

"Keep your eyes off that gun, Mr. Stanton!" she warned him. "This one of mine has a hair-trigger that is always begging me to pull. If I happen to shoot, I'm afraid you'll take a quick trip to join your late partner, Asa Beveridge."

"Beveridge?"

"Yes. The man you stabbed in the back in the jungle up the Meinam River, in Siam."

"I didn't do it," he faltered.

"Didn't you? Well, there are people who say you did, and I have no reason to doubt the word of at least one of them," was her rejoinder. "I was going to add that this automatic pistol of mine has one of the newest improved silencers."

"Well?"

"Nothing! Only that if it became necessary for me to shoot you, no one who came in afterward would have any idea how you had met your death. There would not be the least sound from the pistol."

She was saying this in such a gentle tone that it threw Stanton a little off his guard. He did not realize that she had such a close eye on his every movement.

So it was that as he made a move to get his big revolver on the desk, the automatic was thrust into his mouth, making his teeth ache, as the girl's voice, suddenly as cold and keen as chilled steel, hissed in his ear:

"Another move and I'll pull the trigger!"

Ralph Stanton did not make the move.

CHAPTER V.

A MELEE IN THE DARK.

"You are rather rough, young lady!" Stanton managed to say, as she slowly withdrew the pistol. "May I ask who you are?"

Ralph Stanton actually had been relieved when he felt the automatic in his mouth, for it told him that he was dealing with a real, flesh-and-blood personage. A ghost would not be likely to use a revolver of steel and vulcanite, and if the pistol was real, of course the owner was also real.

"I don't know that I am under any obligation to tell you who I am," she returned. "Suppose I say I represent the Siamese government?"

"I shouldn't believe you," he rejoined curtly.

"Why not?"

"You are an American."

"That doesn't prove anything. Many Americans are in the employ of foreign governments in secret-service work."

"Yes, but you are not one of them."

"I should like to know how you are so certain about that."

Ralph Stanton smiled slightly. He was getting over his terror, and he felt rather proud of his own perceptions, as he replied slowly:

"You have the voice of that partner of mine you have already mentioned. If you were a man, instead of a woman, I should say it was he talking. As it is, you must be some relative. Perhaps you are——"

"I am his sister, Edith Beveridge," she broke in. "Now, can you understand why I am here to-night?"

He did not reply. But his heavy, gasping breath was answer enough. If he did not know, he suspected.

She moved around to the side of the desk, and at the same instant threw back her veil.

"Heavens! How like!" he murmured.

She was like her brother. Allowing for her fresh young beauty as against his lean, haggard face, and for the golden-brown hair that curled in little wisps over her forehead, as against the iron-gray hair of the man, they were marvelously alike.

Edith Beveridge was a beautiful girl. Asa Beveridge had been a handsome man.

She stood at the side of the desk, her pistol pointed directly at the cowed face before her, as she placed her left hand fairly upon a heap of large rubies that he had separated from the mixture of diamonds and rubies farther along.

"Have you come to rob me of my property?" he demanded, trying to hide the fear that ran through every part of him as he looked at the revolver in the girl's hand.

"Your property!"

There was no mistaking the irony with which she uttered these two simple words.

"It is my property," he insisted. "There is nothing remarkable in a gentleman having a collection of jewels, I suppose. It happens to be a fad of mine. I have always been a collector of gems."

"It is not the stones I want so much. I may take them, because they are not yours. But that will be an after-consideration with me."

"Very generous!" he sneered.

"I have come for a much more serious purpose than to get from you a few handfuls of gems stolen from the Great Pagoda at Bangkok, Wat Chang," she continued. "What that purpose is, you, the murderer of my brother, ought to be able to guess."

"I haven't the faintest idea."

It was a bluff, but he managed to carry it along almost convincingly.

This girl, full of indignation over the sufferings of her beloved brother, even though she knew he had got all over them now, was not to be convinced by bravado, however.

"The old Mosaic law demanded a life for a life. This has been the penalty demanded by the common law of humanity ever since, although many offenders have escaped, and so escape in even these days. Not all of them, however."

He made another move toward the revolver on his desk.

This time she struck him a powerful blow across his puffy knuckles, so that he drew back with an involuntary howl of pain.

"I have told you several times neither to look at that pistol or offer to touch it," she reminded him coldly. "The trigger of this gun of mine is very finely balanced, and I don't want it to go off until I have said all that I intended to say when I came in."

"You seem to be in control of the situation," he growled. "So I suppose there is nothing for me to do but to hear you out."

"Sensible conclusion, Mr. Stanton!"

"Is this to be a cold-blooded murder?" he demanded.

"It is to be vengeance," was her reply.

Her eyes were blazing now, and her fair young cheek flushed as she recalled the story she had heard of her brother being stabbed in the back in the lonely jungle, with a great serpent hovering above him to make sure of his destruction if by any chance the knife thrust should fail.

Then there had been the quick interposition of the world-famous detective, Nick Carter, the man who never had known fear, and who risked his own life to save her brother.

She had heard more about this man Stanton, too. How he had tried again and again to steal every diamond and ruby that was the property of Asa Beveridge, and how, at last, he had got away from Bangkok with a fortune in jewels wrenched from the sacred images of the Great Pagoda, Wat Chang, in Bangkok.

Rapidly she reviewed all that she had learned about this man, and, as she did so, she was more than ever determined to make him suffer in proportion to the evil he had wrought.

Edith Beveridge had been brought up always to regard the crime of theft as despicable.

As for murder, such a possibility as men trying to kill each other had always seemed a thing so far apart from her life that she could not grasp it, until she found that her own brother would have been a victim but for the prompt assistance of this world-renowned detective.

She went from point to point calmly and deliberately, and Stanton's face, which had been red and purple at first, and afterward had gone to a leaden paleness, now turned to a sickly green.

In plain terms, Ralph Stanton was scared out of his wits, and would have said that he did not consider his life

worth five minutes' purchase if he could have been brought to say anything.

It had struck him, after the first shock caused by Edith Beveridge's mysterious appearance in his library, that the girl might be insane. She might just have heard of her brother's death, and lost her mind.

But in the deadly calm with which she spoke to him he knew there was much more than the ravings of a maniac.

If he could only get hold of his revolver, and at the same time keep the muzzle of that steady automatic turned away from him, he might get the best of things even yet.

But the girl was gazing at him so straight, and her pistol pointed so unwaveringly at his breast, that he knew he must not make any false move.

At the slightest indication of his trying to get at his revolver, he was convinced the girl would shoot, and that, if she did shoot, his hand would be shattered by a bullet.

In that moment of despair, he cursed himself for not having taken more precautions against his being surprised in so humiliating a way. The warning he had had in the morning, when he found his own bloodstained knife in his desk, should have been sufficient.

Ralph Stanton—or John Grantley—was a thorough coward, and he would have been willing to make any terms with this beautiful avenger, had he felt that she would listen.

But he knew instinctively that he would be only wasting breath to seek anything like a compromise with her, and he looked about for some other way of escape.

Craven-hearted as he was, Stanton was like other men of his type. He valued his life above all else, and before risking that he would fight with the hysterical courage born of fear, instead of with the cool bravery of the natural manly man.

His pulses hammered now with a false determination to fight to the end. He was like a cornered rat. There was but one way to escape, and that was to fly straight at the foe.

As this idea seethed through his half-controlled brain, he glanced up craftily at the young girl who stood there regarding him with the contemptuous regard with which she might have looked at a snake with its poison fangs drawn.

This was his moment, he felt. Gathering up all his energies, and screwing up his wavering courage to the highest pitch he could, he leaped at Edith Beveridge just before his flaccid muscles threatened to refuse obedience to his will.

He had charged himself with the force of frantic effort, and it carried forward with such power that he came into collision with the girl like a runaway battering ram.

Edith Beveridge had been taken by surprise, and she could not help yielding before the sheer weight of the burly man who had attacked her.

But she did not lose her self-possession.

Even as she was compelled to leap backward, she leveled her automatic and pulled the trigger.

She had not been able to take aim, however, and the bullet grazed Ralph Stanton's temple and cut a lock of his greasy hair away as if it had been done with a pair of scissors.

"Now I have you!" hissed Stanton, as he flung himself upon the girl, trying to get his strong, coarse fingers upon her soft white throat.

Edith was helpless. She could only pull herself farther back, in the hope of getting beyond the ruffian's reach.

It was of no use. He followed her, and, doubling one of his fists, would have struck her full in the face.

But the blow was never dealt.

Suddenly a hand grasped him by the back of the neck—a hand that felt as if the fingers and thumb were all of spring steel—and he was drawn back until he fell at full length, with every bit of fight out of him.

"Oh, Mr. Carter!" cried the young girl joyously. "Is it you?"

Before the detective could reply, the lights went out, and his feet were knocked from under him by something that felt like an enormous beam.

Then he was picked up by several hands, and, as there was a great banging of doors, he was thrown from somewhere at a little height, coming down headfirst.

When he came to himself he was lying on the grass in front of the porch of Asa Beveridge's bungalow, and another summer's day was just breaking through the purple shadows of the eastern sky.

CHAPTER VI.

BEHIND THE SCREEN.

Nick Carter got up and stretched himself. Then he tested his limbs one by one, afterward passed his hands over his biceps, back and chest, and bent down to feel if his knees were in good condition.

"By George!" he exclaimed. "I don't believe they did me any harm at all. My hat is jammed on my head, and I can't find even a scratch about myself. They must have doped me in some way when they threw me down the steps at that house."

He brushed the dust off his clothing with his hands, and tried to connect up the different incidents of the night before.

"The first thing is to find out how the young lady is," he muttered. "I had an idea she was up to some mischief last night. That was why I followed her. It doesn't seem as if I did much good for her, after all."

One thing was clear to Nick Carter, and that was that there were others in the robbery of the Great Pagoda besides Ralph Stanton. Who those others were he had not been able to find out yet—but he intended to do so.

He saw it was just four o'clock as he consulted his watch.

"I don't suppose I was lying here for much more than half an hour, if that," he decided. "Well, I can't do anything till people are moving in the house. I wonder whether Chick woke up."

He stole quietly to his bedroom, that he shared with his assistant, and was relieved to see Chick in bed and sleep.

Without disturbing him, Nick slipped into his own bed and slumbered till six. Then he got up and went to the kitchen, where the woman who attended to the household of Asa Beveridge was lighting a fire for breakfast.

Her husband, the chauffeur, was in the cottage they shared a little way from the bungalow, and the woman said she could call him by telephone if he wanted the car.

She could not conceive any other reason for one of Mr. Beveridge's guests invading her kitchen at that unusual time in the morning.

"I don't want the car—at least, not now," smiled Nick.

"What I came for is to ask if Miss Beveridge is in her room."

"I should think she is. She has been here before, to visit her brother, but I never knew her to get up before seven. I'll go and see, if you like," returned the woman.

"Thanks! I wish you would."

In three or four minutes the woman came rushing down to the kitchen, surprise all over her countenance, and her breath coming and going fast, as if she had been running up and down stairs faster than was good for her.

"Mr. Carter!"

"Well?"

"She's not there!"

"Sure?"

"Quite sure. Her bed has been slept in. But she has not been in it for a long time. I felt the sheets, and they are quite cold. She is not in the room."

"Did you notice whether her hat and cloak, that she wore last night, were in the room?"

"They are gone."

"Thank you," returned Nick quietly. "No doubt she has gone out for a walk. It is very beautiful up in the woods here in the early morning. It is the sort of thing New Yorkers are likely to appreciate, you know."

Nick strolled out of the kitchen, the picture of calmness, while the woman returned to her business of lighting the fire, satisfied from the manner of the detective that there was nothing remarkable in the going from her bedroom at an early hour of the young sister of Asa Beveridge.

The calmness dropped from Nick Carter like a cloak as soon as he was outside the kitchen and had closed the door, however.

"The infernal scoundrel!" muttered Nick. "And those fellows he has helping him. I might have known that he would have a gang to help him in that lonely house. He would know I would be after him for those stones at some time, and that the only way to hold them would be to fight us off."

He went into the living room, where he had once seen Beveridge and two other rascals, now safely in jail, conferring on the price of a quantity of gems. The room was empty now.

"I don't think it would do any good to call Beveridge," he murmured. "I'll wait a while till I have hit on a plan."

He strolled out of the house and plunged into the woods, where he might be able to think over things more at his ease.

In five minutes he was back in the house, and going up to his bedroom to wake up Chick.

"What are we to do?" asked Chick, when he had woke up and listened to what his chief had to say. "You think they have caught Miss Beveridge and are holding her?"

"I don't know what they have done. But I hope I may find her in that house over there. Let us get over in a hurry. Be sure your revolver is all right. We may have to stand off a lot of rascals, you know."

Chick accepted this as if it were all a matter of course. He had been on too many expeditions that meant a fight to be disturbed by one more or less at any time.

They took a short cut through the woods, until they reached the oak which Nick and Asa Beveridge had used as a post of observation before. Here Nick trained his

field glass upon the house, and particularly upon the library windows.

Nothing remarkable was to be made out. The window shades were down, as they had been the night before, and the whole house looked peaceful and as natural as usual.

"I notice one strange thing, Chick," observed his chief, after a long and careful survey of the house, and particularly of the roofs. "No smoke is coming from any of the chimneys."

"There might not be, except from the kitchen," returned Chick.

"There is the kitchen chimney over to the left. Do you see any smoke coming out?"

"Not a smoke."

"But you see it is all blackened around the top, showing that the chimney is in constant use, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Let's go to the back of the house, and find out why there is no fire in the kitchen range on this particular morning. Even if the owner of the house were not there, we might expect that the servants would want some breakfast."

Chick nodded without speaking, and the two hastened to the rear of the rather extensive premises that made up the mansion of Joy View.

Everything was quiet when they got to the outer kitchen, or scullery. The door was unfastened, and they went in, to try the door of the kitchen.

That door was bolted inside. But the bolt was not much protection, for they soon found one of the windows not only unfastened, but down a little way at the top, as if to let out heat and fumes of cooking.

By the time Chick had let himself in this way and unbolted the door for his chief, Nick had settled in his own mind what Ralph Stanton had done.

"The house is empty, I think, Chick," he remarked. "Except that we might find some one in one of the upstairs rooms."

"Whom?"

"Come on and help me to look through the house. We have to make sure that Ralph Stanton has gone, before we do anything else."

They went to the bedroom which had been occupied by Stanton. As Nick had expected, the bed had not been slept in.

"The library, Chick!"

"All right!"

This room was the one where Nick had had his adventure on the night before. Signs of the disturbance were still there.

A long, heavy joist, that had undoubtedly knocked him off his feet, lay on the floor, just as it had been dropped after disabling him.

The safe was wide open—and empty!

"They've got away with everything, according to surface indications, chief," remarked Chick.

Nick paid no heed. He was at the desk where the jewels had lain on the white blotter when Edith Beveridge had gone into the room. There were no diamonds and rubies there. But close inspection enabled him to see where their sharp edges had scuffed up the blotter.

"They were gathered up in a hurry, I should say," he

murmured. "Pity they didn't drop some. But it seems they didn't."

From the library they went to the other rooms in the lower part of the building. Not a living thing was in any of them.

The second floor, whereon was the bedroom of Drumm, as well as of Ralph Stanton, told the same story. There were several bedrooms, but the beds in all showed that they had not been occupied. All were neatly made.

"What do you think of it?" asked Chick.

"That's an easy one," returned Nick, with a shrug. "They've all got out, bag and baggage."

"Scared, eh?"

"Probably. They found that we knew they had the stones here, and of course it would be only a question of a few hours, at most, before they would be captured—stones as well as the people who had them."

While speaking, Nick had been hurrying to the staircase that led to the floor above, where most of the servants slept.

Every room was empty, and every cupboard and recess was examined. Nick was looking for something that he had not mentioned, but which Chick understood as well as his chief.

"There is a tower, Chick. Where are the stairs to it? Have you seen them?"

As Nick asked this, he answered his own query by opening a door which revealed a winding staircase. Before he could open this door, however, he had to shoot back two heavy bolts.

"Wonder why they took the trouble to bolt that staircase. They were not afraid of burglars coming in that way, I should think. They couldn't well get there except by an airship."

Chick was keyed up to such a pitch that he was inclined to say things which had no particular meaning, and which he knew to be utterly banal. It was merely an indication of tense nerves.

Nick Carter, a student of physiology, and especially of mental phenomena, understood this perfectly. He did not reply, but went up the winding staircase to see what might be in the tower.

He found a large, square room, inclosed by glass on every side, and with a glass roof. It was comfortably furnished, with chairs, a table, a sofa, in front of which was a screen, leaving only the end of it exposed to view, and an easel, on which was a canvas primed for use, but with no picture.

"The former owner of this place—an old soldier—was fond of drawing and painting," observed Nick. "This must have been his studio."

He looked about him and then moved the screen from in front of the sofa.

He was not surprised with what he found there.

Edith Beveridge, her cloak still on, and a large table cover, which evidently had been taken from the table in the middle of the room, wrapped about her, lay fast asleep.

"Is she asleep, or—or——" began Chick.

"She is not in a swoon, or hurt, if that is what you mean," interrupted Nick, after bending over the girl for a moment. "She is in as natural a sleep as she ever knew in her life."

"Well, I'm blessed!" exclaimed Chick.

CHAPTER VII.

A QUICK CHANGE OF SCENE.

"Knock over that chair, Chick!" directed Nick, as he stepped away from the sofa.

Chick tipped over a heavy chair, and it made a crash that would have wakened a night watchman.

They heard the girl stirring behind the screen, and Nick called out, in as calm a tone as he could:

"All right, Miss Beveridge! We are friends. It is Mr. Carter. We have come to take you home."

She stepped out from behind the screen, smiling, to show that she was not hurt, and gave her hand to Nick and Chick in turn, as she said:

"I am so glad to see you. They made me come up here last night and bolted the door at the foot of the stairs."

"Who?" asked Nick.

"I don't know. We were all in the dark, you remember. They did not light up afterward, either. Of course, we can guess. We know who one of the men was. But we can only guess who the others were. When I found I would have to stay here all night, I decided that the only thing would be for me to make myself as comfortable as I could. So I did, and, having the happy faculty of being able to sleep anywhere, I dropped on the sofa and forgot everything till I was awakened by that crash just now."

"I knocked over a chair," explained Chick, rather sheepishly.

"Is that all?" she responded. "It sounded as if the roof had fallen in."

When they had gone downstairs and seated themselves in the library, Nick motioned for his assistant to go out of the room, telling him to make sure no one came into the house without his being notified at once.

"All right, chief," returned Chick. "But I am not looking for anybody to come around here just now."

"No sooner was Chick out of the room and the door closed than the girl jumped from her chair, and, in an earnest voice, said rapidly:

"Mr. Carter, I owe you an apology."

The detective looked at her wonderingly. He could not understand to what she was referring. He did not speak.

"What I mean," she went on impetuously, "is that I had no right to take on my shoulders so important a case as this."

"My dear Miss Beveridge——"

"No, no," she interrupted. "There is no excuse for me, and I know you must be disgusted. I am disgusted with myself. As if an inexperienced girl could interfere successfully with the work of a detective who has given a life's study to criminals and their doings. And especially a detective like Nicholas Carter, the best of them all. I am ashamed."

She dropped into the chair in front of the desk which had been occupied by Ralph Stanton the night before, and then, as she saw, in the mirror facing her, that her hat was slightly awry, she began to straighten it.

The eternal feminine was not to be denied.

"Have you any idea who those men were who came in to help Stanton?" asked the detective, passing over the girl's apologies with a good-humored toss of the head and smile.

"Yes," was her unexpected answer.

"Who do you think they were?"

"The butler, whom they called Drumm, was the principal, and the others were servants in the house, with the chauffeur, Williams. I should say that, if we catch Drumm, Williams, and Stanton, we shall have the three who are at the bottom of the whole affair."

"I felt sure of that," said Nick. "I am glad to have your confirmation. What will you do now? I wish you would go back to your brother at the bungalow."

"Does he know I was out last night?"

"I don't think he does. In fact, I am sure of it," replied Nick.

"He must know I am out now."

"He thinks you went out for an early-morning walk, no doubt. You must make him believe so."

"I will," she answered. "Are you going there, too?"

"No. My assistant and I are going to New York. Tell your brother that if I have anything to say to him, I will use the long-distance telephone."

Nick walked out of the house with the girl, and saw her started by the short cut through the woods, which he knew would soon take her to her brother's bungalow.

Then he went back into the big house, and, accompanied by Chick, searched through it for clues.

"Here's something," suddenly exclaimed Nick, as he picked up a clipping from a newspaper that he found under Stanton's desk in the library. "I am glad I found this."

He showed it to Chick, and together they studied the scrap of newspaper.

It was the advertisement of an ocean-steamship line, giving the sailing time of three different steamers, with the significant proviso: "Sailing subject to danger of capture by foreign war vessels or destruction by submarine mines."

"It is evident that Stanton has been consulting this advertisement, and probably dropped it unwittingly," said Nick. "Anyhow, he would not be looking at this for nothing."

"Going to take a chance, eh? Thinks he will be safer in Europe, even with the war going on, than he is in America! The first steamer to go out will leave tomorrow morning. I'll bet he'll try to go on that."

"We'll be there to stop him if he does," answered Nick quietly.

"What about Beveridge? Aren't you going to get him for anything he has done?"

"No, Chick. He is not so bad as the others. He always struck me as a man who would become a good citizen if he were led in the right direction. Since meeting his sister, I am convinced of that more than ever."

"So am I," declared Chick enthusiastically. "A man who has such a sister couldn't be bad all through. Anyhow, we never thought he was in this Wat Chang case, did we?"

"He was a partner of Grantley's in the mine business, which was nearly as bad," replied Nick. "However, if he will help me to gather in the Wat Chang jewels, and to put Grantley where he ought to be—in jail, he will have done enough to warrant our calling it square."

It was when they were some distance on their way to New York in the train that Chick whispered to Nick to look at the old gentleman sitting in front of them a few seats and across the aisle.

"I have been looking at him, Chick," was the detective's response. "Stay here!"

As he spoke, Nick got up and sauntered down the aisle of the car till he had reached the front end. He gazed through the glass of the door for a few moments, and then strolled back again.

As he did so, he gazed at each of the passengers in the careless manner common to a person who finds himself facing a number of strangers in a public conveyance.

There chanced to be an empty seat opposite that occupied by the old gentleman.

Nick took this seat, and yawned, as if not interested in anything except getting to his journey's end.

Chick watched his chief with a great deal of amusement. He was perfectly aware that Nick was playing a part.

This was soon proved when the detective leaned across the aisle, so that he could address the old man in a tone that would not be heard by any one else around.

"What's the game, Beveridge?" he asked.

The old man looked at Nick frowningly, as if disposed to resent being addressed. Then, as he saw the quizzical expression of good humor in the detective's face, he answered:

"Take a seat by the side of me, and I'll tell you."

He moved to the window, making room for the detective to occupy half his seat. Then he smiled through the heavy white beard and mustache that covered the lower part of his face.

"Disguises don't fool you much, Carter," he remarked.

"Not false beards, at all events," was the cool reply. "I thought you were staying at the bungalow for the present."

"I go where the game is," was the enigmatic rejoinder. "Yes?"

"You don't think you're the only man who knows that Grantley and his gang have got away from Stonecrag, do you?"

"Apparently you know it. It is just as well that you are here. You may help me to turn them up. You know they are preparing to sail for Europe, I suppose?"

That Asa Beveridge was surprised by this piece of information could be seen in his face, notwithstanding that it was hidden beneath the bush of white hair.

"We'll have to move fast, if that's the game," he declared. "I don't know where Grantley would go on the other side, now that everything is stirred up over there. London, I should think."

"Is that where he usually makes his headquarters when on the other side?" asked Nick.

"No. He prefers Paris. Of course, he is at home in London or Berlin or Antwerp or Edinburgh or Vienna or anywhere else over there. But he is a man who never takes any more personal risks than he has to, and I can't picture him going over on the Continent at all while this fuss is on. He'll stay in London."

"Whereabouts?"

"Anywhere. He might go to the East End and bury himself in Whitechapel or Stepney, or you might hear of him in Park Lane or Bayswater. It all depends on how the cards lie for him."

"The point is, that he must not be allowed to go at all," remarked Nick calmly. "I am going down to New York to stop his getting away. You'd better keep that

make-up on, but keep with me till we are on the track of the gang."

"I believe I can take you directly to them," answered Beveridge.

"Why do you think that?"

"Because I know the old joint where I used to meet Stanton, when I was not as straight as I mean to be now. He thinks I am dead, so he won't be afraid to go there."

"Is it uptown or downtown?"

"I'll show you when we get off the train," was all Beveridge would say at that time."

Nick moved away, saying he would see him when they were in the Grand Central Station. Going back to Chick, he cautioned him to keep an eye on the old fellow, at the same time whispering who the old man really was.

"Don't you think you can trust him?" asked Chick.

"I believe I can, but if we happened to lose him it would give us a lot of trouble. I'm going to take a nap till we get in. I leave him in your charge."

The event proved that Nick was quite safe in leaving Chick to look after the disguised Asa Beveridge, for when they got into the station and Nick awoke from his doze, Chick led him and Beveridge together to a taxicab, and, without wasting any time, they were all three bowling away to an address that Beveridge had given the driver in a whisper.

It was an apartment house in one of the cross streets, not far from the lower end of Central Park, at which the taxicab stopped.

Beveridge led the way to the elevator, after paying the driver, and, telling the elevator boy to take them to the sixth floor, he smiled comfortably at Nick and his assistant.

The sixth floor was the top story of the house, and Beveridge led them to a rear apartment of four rooms, into which he let himself with his own key.

When he switched on the electric light, he revealed a comfortable little home, which might have belonged to a small-salaried clerk or a mechanic with a steady job.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MAN WITH THE GROCERIES.

Hardly were the three men inside the apartment when Nick caught a murmur of voices outside the main door. Somebody was in the public hallway, and an open transom enabled their voices to penetrate to the interior.

The detective held up his hand to his two companions for silence.

Beveridge also raised his hand, as a warning to Chick not to make any noise, as he listened intently.

For some moments the buzz of whispers outside continued. At last they heard somebody growl, in a little louder tone:

"It was the other flat. There is nobody in here. How could there be? We have paid the rent right along in his name. Nobody has any right to go in, and no one has a key. I haven't even got one myself. I suppose the superintendent has a master key. But I doubt whether he ever uses it. If he did, he would not find anything suspicious."

Nick Carter knew the voice, notwithstanding that it was held down so that it was hardly articulate.

"Grantley!" he whispered to Chick.

"Thought so. Wonder who the others are?"

"We'll find out later."

Beveridge led the others into what was, by courtesy, called the "parlor," and which looked out on the court—when the window shade was up.

The shade was down now, and, of course, they did not roll it up. There was no desire to have anybody know they were in the flat.

"Where are the others?" whispered Nick.

"In the flat in front."

"Well, we shall have to get in and see what they are doing. If Grantley intends to sail to-morrow on that steamer, as is likely, he will most probably go aboard to-night."

"How are we to get into the flat?" asked Chick. "By the dumb-waiter?"

His chief shook his head decidedly.

"That would never do. In the first place, it is a trick that they would surely suspect as soon as they heard the thing come straining up. And again, whoever was on the waiter would be at a disadvantage as soon as it came level with their flat."

"And the door to the dumb-waiter would be fastened inside, so that you could not get through until somebody opened the door," added Beveridge.

"I merely mentioned it," explained Chick, rather chagrined that he had ever spoke of a device which was obviously impossible. "But we have to get in somehow."

"Listen!" whispered Nick. "I hear the elevator stopping on this floor. Who can that be? There are only two flats on this floor—one at the front and the other at the back."

"Yes. This house stands on a narrow plot, and is smaller than most elevator apartments in New York. That is why we took these two flats. It gave us the whole floor to ourselves."

Nick had not stopped to listen to this explanation. Seizing a chair, he had carried it out to the diminutive private hall, and was peeping through a narrow slit at the bottom of the partly open transom.

What he saw made him smile with satisfaction.

A roughly dressed man, with a slouch hat pulled down in front, and whose old sack coat, flying open, revealed a blue flannel shirt beneath, was carrying some groceries in three paper parcels, and a bottle of milk.

He had just got out of the elevator, and as the car disappeared on its downward journey, the man dropped one of his parcels, which revealed itself as a loaf of bread.

In picking that up, he dropped another, and then had a narrow escape from letting the milk bottle fall with a smash.

Nick stepped down from the chair and grabbed Chick by the shoulders as he whispered in his ear:

"Be ready with a gag. Get that towel from the bathroom. It looks like a clean one, hanging on the rail. If it isn't clean, I don't know that I care much. Beveridge, stay out of sight till I call you. Get into the kitchen!"

These orders were given swiftly, while the detective had his hand on the spring latch of the outer door.

He waited just long enough to see Asa Beveridge vanish into the absurdly small kitchen and close the door, while Chick stepped into the bathroom and took the towel from the rail. Then Nick softly opened the outer door and stepped into the hall.

He had seen that the roughly attired man was looking the other way, and that it would be possible to steal up to him, unobserved.

This was exactly what Nick did. He was behind the man before his presence was suspected. Then his arm twisted around the man's neck, holding him in the paralyzing hug that the French call *la garrote*.

The detective was thoughtful enough to catch at the bottle of milk with his disengaged hand. It would not have been wise to let the bottle go crashing to the tiled floor. The other parcels fell, but they did not make a noticeable noise.

The man gurgled and tried to shout. But the grip on his neck was too much for him. The detective's arm was across his captive's Adam's apple, and it tightened a little more every time the other endeavored to make a sound.

"Keep quiet!" Nick whispered in his ear. "Then you won't be hurt. Otherwise it will be bad for you."

Nick threw the hand holding the milk bottle around the stranger's waist and lifted him clear of the floor. In this position he carried his prisoner into the flat and passed him to Chick.

"Put the gag in his mouth, Chick!"

"Here it is!" responded Chick, holding out the towel.

"Hold him after you've gagged him," went on the detective. "I want to get those things he's dropped outside."

Chick was an efficient young man. He tightened the towel around the captive's mouth in a second or two. Then, catching him by both arms above the elbows, he pulled them together behind, and clipped a pair of handcuffs on the wrists.

Nick brought in the three parcels of groceries and closed the door.

"What is that, chief?" asked Chick. "I hope it is something to eat. I'm as hungry as a coyote. Can I have a drink of milk?"

"Wait a moment," was the reply. "These things don't belong to us—unless we count them spoils of war. Let's see whom we have here. Bring him into this room, where we can see his face."

Chick pushed the prisoner—who was a tall, well-built man—into the living room of the flat and up to the window.

The shade was down, but it was the middle of the afternoon, and there was plenty of light, even through the white shade.

Nick snapped off the slouch hat, at the same time hoisting the prisoner under the chin with his forefinger, to make him hold up his head.

"Well!" ejaculated Chick. "Who'd have thought it?"

"It is what I expected," returned Nick.

"We know this fellow, chief!" exclaimed Chick, still open-mouthed in astonishment. "But he doesn't look at all the same."

"Clothes make a difference," said Nick Carter, with a smile. "But there's no doubt about this fellow. Take the gag out of his mouth, and let's see if he's willing to tell the truth."

Chick removed the towel, and the prisoner stretched his mouth from side to side, as if to take the cramp out of his lips and jaw muscles. Then Nick asked him sternly:

"What is your name?"

"Drumm!" was the surly reply.

It was indeed the butler whom Nick last had seen

immaculately dressed in evening clothes, and who had an English accent that was almost painful. He had lost his accent now, under the stress of unusual conditions.

"You are in the employ of John Grantley?" went on Nick.

"Don't know any such man," grunted Drumm.

"I beg your pardon," said the detective, with a smile.

"I forgot. I meant to say Ralph Stanton."

"I was the butler for Mr. Stanton—yes," admitted Drumm, scowling from Nick to Chick, and then looking about the flat as if to make sure that there was no one else there.

"And now you are helping him to get away with a quantity of diamonds and rubies that you know are stolen."

"Who says so?" demanded Drumm. "I am still getting wages from Mr. Stanton, and if he wanted me to come to New York, there was no reason why I shouldn't do it. It's my own business."

"Drumm is inclined to be fresh, I should say," remarked Chick. "Shall I take him down a notch?"

"Never mind! I'll attend to him," rejoined Nick. "Unlock his handcuffs."

"I should say so," came in a surly grunt from the prisoner. "I'd like to know what right you had to put them on."

Disregarding this, Chick unlocked the handcuffs and put them in his pocket. He was glad he had them, for it was his firm conviction that he might need them again before this adventure was over.

"Who is in that front flat, Drumm?" suddenly demanded the detective.

"What front flat?"

"Don't prevaricate, Drumm!" warned the detective. "I have you all in my hands now, Stanton and all, and I know pretty well who is in there. You'd better answer my question."

Drumm looked hard at the stern face before him, and came to the conclusion that it would not be safe to refuse.

CHAPTER IX.

INTO A HORNETS' NEST.

"Ralph Stanton is in there," he replied sullenly.

"I know that," responded Nick. "Who else?"

"Jeremiah Johnson!"

"Ah!"

Nick Carter could not help betraying a little surprise as this name fell from the lips of Drumm.

"Johnson is out on bail," interposed Chick. "I borrowed an evening paper on the train while you were dozing, and I saw that he got out this morning."

"I am not surprised at that," remarked Nick. "He was prepared to give very heavy bail, and I knew he would get out if there were any chance at all. The next time he gets behind the bars, I think he'll stay there. It will not be a question of bail then."

The truth was—although Nick Carter did not care to admit it before this man Drumm—that the case against Jeremiah Johnson was not very strong from a legal standpoint.

He had insisted that the men taken in his place were there trying to pawn certain jewelry, and that he was not inclined to accept it. They were arguing the point, he declared, when the police broke in.

All this had been told snugly and with care, so that there should not be any loose ends that the prosecution could get hold of, and the result was that he was now out on bail.

"What gets over me," observed Nick, "is that this notorious crook and receiver of stolen property could not keep his fingers out of a job even for a day. It looks as if he must have come direct from the Tombs to this place. Didn't he, Drumm?"

"I don't know," grunted Drumm. "I never saw him till to-day."

"Don't lie, Drumm!"

Drumm started, and a look of ghastly astonishment spread over his placid features as he looked through the doorway into the kitchen, the door of which had just opened.

The man who had told the butler not to lie was Asa Beveridge.

"Beveridge?" gasped Drumm. "I heard you were dead."

"I was—nearly, but not quite. You made a mistake when you said you had never seen Jerry Johnson until to-day, didn't you? Come, now! Don't try to make up a new yarn. Give us the truth."

"I have seen Johnson before," confessed Drumm.

"Of course you have," snapped Beveridge. "And you don't always go by the name of Drumm, either."

"That's my real name."

"It may be, for anything I know," conceded Asa Beveridge. "But you were known in California as 'English Joe,' weren't you?"

"My name is Joseph Drumm, and I was born in London," was the short reply. "I was in service there up to the time I came to America."

"And you've done little confidence games whenever you got a chance, haven't you? Sometimes silverware and jewelry belonging to your employers has disappeared, too, hasn't it?" went on Beveridge relentlessly. "You'd better fess up. This is Mr. Carter, the detective, and he can send you up for ten years, if he likes."

"I've told you all there is to tell," was the snarling rejoinder. "You are not so good, Beveridge. I could tell a few things on you that——"

"I don't care what you tell. Mr. Carter knows the worst about me, and anything you could say wouldn't weigh any," interrupted Beveridge. "Have you got a key to that other flat?"

Drumm looked from one to the other, as if he felt that he was cornered and would fight if there were any chance for him.

"Look for that key, Chick!"

This curt order came from Nick Carter. His assistant passed his hand rapidly over Drumm's clothing, and fished out a flat brass key from one of the outside pockets of his sack coat.

"This is the little joker," observed Chick, as he handed the key to his chief.

"Is there anybody else in that flat besides Johnson and Ralph Stanton?" asked Nick, turning to Drumm.

"No."

"Where are all the other people from Joy View? Where is Williams, the chauffeur, for instance? He came away from Joy View with you."

As Nick Carter said this he gazed straight into the eyes of Joseph Drumm, and he knew he had the truth when

Drumm said that Williams had gone to friends of his in Brooklyn with his wife.

The other servants, he added, had dispersed, each having been paid a month's wages in advance when they were discharged.

"Mr. Stanton told them all he would want them again in a few weeks, when he returned to Joy View," finished Drumm.

"I don't think he will ever go back," remarked Chick. "We shall have to handcuff Joseph Drumm for a little while again, Chick."

"Why?" blurted out Drumm, in strong protest.

"Because we haven't time to take you to a police station just now, and we can't leave you here alone, unless you're fixed so that you can't walk away."

Chick had slipped on the handcuffs while Nick was talking. He fastened the prisoner's hands in front of him this time, however.

"Take him into the kitchen, Beveridge," directed Nick. "When you come out—if you do come—lock the kitchen door, and lock all the other doors, too. The fire escape is in this room. He would have to go through two doors to get to it."

Nick Carter had a way of covering all points, and Drumm's face fell as he heard these orders, which would shut everything against him if he tried to get away.

Arrangements were soon made, and then Nick, with Chick by his side, went out of the flat and walked swiftly along the hall until they stood outside the heavy door which guarded the flat at the front of the house.

"As soon as we are inside, you jump for Stanton and I'll get Johnson," whispered Nick.

"You are taking the hard one," grumbled Chick. "Any one could put it over Stanton. But Johnson is a tough nut when he gets good and started."

"Do as you're told," was Nick's brief rejoinder.

The detective took the brass key that had been in Drumm's pocket and was about to put it in the lock, when he heard a rattle inside, and quickly drew back.

"Look out, Chick!"

Both of them withdrew into the shadow at the side of the door, as it slowly opened, and the face of Ralph Stanton showed. Obviously, he was looking to see whether Drumm was coming with the groceries.

Hardly had the door opened, when Stanton and Nick saw each other simultaneously.

With a low ejaculation, Stanton tried to close the door.

But Nick was too quick for him. His foot was thrust into the opening, and the door stopped there.

"Now, Chick!"

There was no need for this reminder. Chick seized the door with his chief and it was torn wide open.

In dashed the two detectives, and, as Nick hurled himself upon Jeremiah Johnson, the door closed with a slam, and they were all in the semidarkness of the private hall.

"Grab your man, Chick!" called out the detective, as he slowly forced the fence back into the dining room.

"I've got him!" replied Chick.

The assistant had taken Stanton by the throat and had pinned him firmly against the wall.

It looked like an easy victory, and Nick was actually feeling in his pockets with one hand, while holding Johnson with the other, when there came a quick change.

Two big men jumped at the detectives from behind, and pulled them away.

Taken entirely by surprise, neither Nick nor Chick could make any effective resistance. They were dragged back, and, ere they could recover their balance, Johnson and Stanton leaped forward to help their comrades.

"That's that lying Drumm!" growled Chick. "He said there were only two in here."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Jeremiah Johnson. "Good for English Joe. He's a slick citizen. I'll back him to fool any one, even Nick Carter. He's as smooth as they make 'em. Melted butter is not in it with him."

Carter made a mental resolve to deal with English Joe in a way that would be entirely effective when the time should come. Meanwhile, he had enough to do with the immediate business on hand.

The gang had ropes ready for just such an emergency as this, and Chick was tied hand and foot within sixty seconds of the time he burst in, with his chief, at the front door.

It took longer to secure Nick, however. The famous detective never voluntarily submitted to any such indignity, and though he had been compelled to yield on more than one occasion, he had fought to the very end.

It was so now. First he sent his fist into Jeremiah Johnson's eye with such good will that it closed that organ almost immediately. Then he caught one of the big ruffians whom he had not expected to find here under the chin, and knocked him back against the wall, half senseless.

"Williams, I see!" muttered Nick. "That's another lie charged against Drumm."

There was another big fellow to deal with. He was tall, and he had muscles like steel. This was proved by the fact that Nick was unable to bend back the arm of the man, even though the detective had it in a firm grip.

It had never happened before in Carter's recollection.

Always when he managed to get his hold—one of the best known to the jujutsu method—he had been able to twist the arm of even the strongest opponent until he yelled for mercy.

There was one way of meeting this hold, as there is for every one known in wrestling of any school.

Heretofore, Nick had never met a man who knew how to put on the opposition lock so that it would prevail. Now, however, the man who could do it was fighting him.

As Nick fell back, after vainly trying to overcome his assailant in this way, he broke out involuntarily:

"Yokohama Bill!"

The other man grinned. Then he chuckled aloud.

"That's right, Carter! I'm Yokohama Bill, all right. I learned this lock of yours and how to meet it right down there on the wharf. You're not the only man in New York who can put over jujutsu!"

"All right, Yokohama! I'm glad I met you," was all that Nick replied.

"Why?"

"Because of that little job of yours, where the man died, up in the Bronx, two years ago. You ought not to have come back to New York just then. It was a mistake, Bill!"

With a foul curse, Yokohama Bill struck at Nick

Carter's face, and it was only by skillful ducking that Nick avoided the blow.

He did avoid it, however, and stung by the attack, which caught his ear as the immense fist passed his cheek, he let fly with his own solid knuckles, and smashed it into the already broken nose of Yokohama.

The next moment he was hurled to the floor, and, while Stanton prevented Yokohama Bill seeking revenge on the detective by brutally striking at his face as he lay helpless, ropes were passed around his arms and legs, and knotted so firmly that he could not move.

Then Yokohama Bill, Williams, Ralph Stanton, and Jeremiah Johnson stood over their two prisoners and debated as to what should be done with them.

"I say, croak them all!" advised Yokohama Bill.

"Don't be a fool, Yokohama!" growled Stanton. "Do you think, if we did that, any of us would escape the electric chair? Think of something else, fellows!"

"Why not leave them here?" suggested Johnson. "With one of us to watch them. Then the others could arrange what has to be done outside."

"That listens well!" replied Stanton. "I'll stay here, because I shall know what to do if anybody comes."

"How long will you stay?" asked Yokohama. "If we're going to beat it the way you said, there won't be much time to linger around here. There's another thing you've forgotten. Where's English Joe?"

"That's so!" said Stanton. "Where's Drumm? I'll see if I can make this fellow tell. He knows, of course."

He pointed to the prostrate Nick Carter, but one look at the face of the detective told him that it would be useless to ask him, while Chick's countenance expressed a pugnacious obstinacy that nothing could penetrate.

"They must have got Drumm in the street, and made him tell where we were," suggested Williams.

"I don't believe it," returned Stanton. "I know Drumm too well. They wouldn't get anything out of him."

"You bet they wouldn't," coincided Yokohama Bill.

At this juncture there came a long, insistent ring at the electric bell belonging to the outer door!

CHAPTER X.

HIS OWN MEDICINE.

Hastily they dragged Nick Carter and Chick into the kitchen at the very end of the private hall, and closed the door.

This flat was much larger than the rear one, in which Asa Beveridge had been left with Joseph Drumm. There were seven rooms in this suite, and most of the chambers were larger than in the rear flat.

"What shall we do?" whispered Stanton, in a low tone. "We don't dare to open it."

"Ah! What's the matter with you?" snarled Jeremiah Johnson, who was holding a handkerchief to his injured eye. "You're afraid of your own shadow. How can any one hurt us now? We have the worst of the whole bunch tied up on the floor of your kitchen, haven't we?"

"You mean Nick Carter?"

"Of course I mean Nick Carter. Where is there anybody else in New York who comes within a thousand miles of him? Why, he nearly licked Yokohama Bill just now, after blacking my eye and poking Williams under the chin and nearly sending him to sleep. So long

as we have him on his back in our kitchen, we can laugh at anybody else. Open the door."

"You open it, Jerry!"

"Bah! You're a cur, Stanton! All right! I'll open the door!"

Johnson went to the front door and opened it a little way.

As he did so, Joseph Drumm stumbled in. He was whiter than usual, and his hands were in front of him. They were still held together by the steel bracelets.

"Hello, Drumm! What's this?" gasped Stanton.

"Shut the door!" groaned Drumm. "I was in—in—another flat! And I—I—got up the ladder in the kitchen that leads to the roof. They hadn't thought of that. They only considered the fire escape, which was in another room."

"Well?"

Drumm seemed to be only half sensible, and it was imperative to find out what he had been doing before he collapsed altogether.

"The ladder doesn't show unless you look for it. It is in a little recess, like a tall closet, and there is a narrow door hiding it. I'd seen such arrangements before, and I guessed what it was."

"And you got to the roof that way, and then came down in the outside hall, eh?" prompted Johnson.

"Where was the flat?" put in Stanton.

"At the rear."

"The one Beveridge used to have?"

"Yes."

"And it was Nick Carter who put those handcuffs on you?"

"It was done at his orders. The man that did it, I am going to kill. It was his assistant, the fellow they call Chick. I'm going to——"

This was all Drumm could say. There was a cut on his forehead, indicating that he had hurt himself in the course of his climbing about to escape from the flat, and he seemed to have been injured in other ways.

"That fellow, English Joe, never did have the strength of a fly," declared Yokohama Bill scornfully. "And he doesn't know what nerve means."

"But he's an artistic liar," put in Jeremiah Johnson, grinning, as he still kept his hand to his eye.

"None better," agreed Stanton.

They drew the butler along the hall and laid him on a sofa in the parlor, where Jeremiah Joe, who had a rude knowledge of "first aid," did what he could to restore him.

"Is that door shut, Williams?" asked Stanton, who was watching the operations of Johnson, and anxiously waiting for Drumm to be well enough to talk again. "I mean, is it fastened? I shut it myself. But I don't remember hearing the spring lock click."

"It's shut, all right," returned Williams. "But I'll go and see."

He went to the private hall and walked along to the front door. They heard it close with a little bang that told it was fastened.

"I had my doubts about that fastening," said Stanton. "I'm glad I sent Williams to see. Now, I'm going to send you down to see about those berths on the ship to-morrow morning. I telephoned to hold passage for six. But I want to make sure there is no slip-up."

Stanton had plenty of money. He had seemed to be

well supplied ever since he had been in New York. So he handed Williams enough to pay for berths for six persons from New York to Liverpool, and told him to hurry back.

"Shall I telephone?"

"Not unless you can't get the berths. I know you can get them. We shall come down late this evening. But you need not come back. You go aboard and straighten everything out. Besides, if you are there, you can make sure no one is on to us. We sail early in the morning. But you never can tell what will happen till you are well out to sea."

"There is nothing to be scared at now that you have Carter safe," growled Johnson, looking up from his ministrations to Drumm. "I've told you that before, haven't I?"

"That may all be," retorted Stanton. "But I believe in taking precautions."

"I have reason to take precautions as much as you," snarled Jeremiah Johnson. "I'm jumping my bail, and I'm leaving a durned good business behind me in New York, just because I daren't stay any longer. But I know who has done it all. It's Nick Carter. So long as we have him where he can't do any more harm, I'm not afraid of anything else."

"I wish Drumm would come to himself, so that he could tell us what has happened to him," wailed Ralph Stanton. "What did he do with the bread and cheese and ham and things and the bottle of milk?"

"Aw! What are you fussing about bottles of milk and bread and ham for?" snapped Johnson. "There's more important matters than that on hand. Who's going to carry those stones when we go down to the steamer?"

"I will," quickly replied Stanton. "I've got them, all right, in bags, and I can handle the lot of them."

"Where are they?"

"Locked in one of the bedrooms, and I'm carrying the key," was Ralph Stanton's reply.

It was at this moment that Johnson gave a sign to Yokohama Bill which that estimable individual evidently understood, for he winked knowingly.

"Which bedroom?" asked Johnson.

"Doesn't matter. I have the key."

"I see. Then it must be that end bedroom. That's the only one that isn't open."

Yokohama Bill strolled carelessly down the private hall until he came to a closed door. This door he pushed, and, after turning the handle, pushed again.

"Where's Williams?" exclaimed Stanton. "I haven't seen him since he went to close that front door."

"He's somewhere about," returned Yokohama Bill carelessly.

"Is Drumm coming around?" asked Stanton, looking down at the still form on the sofa.

Ralph Stanton—or John Grantley—was known to all his associates as a weak, flabby sort of man, both physically and in the matter of courage. He was in such a state of nerves now that he could not keep his mind on one thing for thirty seconds at a time.

That was why he forgot that he had asked Yokohama Bill the question about Williams before he got an answer, and turned to Johnson to say something about Drumm.

Drumm had been hurt very badly, it seemed. Johnson looked him over and bound up several ugly cuts he found on the butler's head. He also applied a small

ammonia bottle to his nostrils, in the effort to bring him to consciousness.

"What are we going to do about him?" asked Stanton anxiously. "You don't think it is another of those heart attacks of his, do you?"

"Shouldn't wonder."

"The doctors have told him he will be taken off in one of them some day, and that he must avoid excitement as much as possible."

"Rather hard for a man in his line of work," laughed Johnson.

But even as Johnson laughed with assumed carelessness, he was keeping an eye on Yokohama Bill.

Suddenly Yokohama came into the room, and, with one twist of his powerful hands, had Stanton on his back on the floor.

"What—what?" gasped Stanton.

"Keep still!" warned Yokohama Bill, as he shook his great fist in the face of the prostrate rascal. "If you don't want to get hurt, don't say anything! Get me?"

"But——"

"Shut up, I tell you!" admonished Yokohama Bill.

"Look here, Yokohama!" persisted Stanton. "Is this a joke? Are you just trying to scare me? Is that all it is? If it is, I'll tell you I don't like——"

"Shut up!" growled the ruffian who was holding him down. "It is a kind of a joke. We're going to have those Wat Chang jewels. We don't want to divvy up with you, because you've had more than your share already. You never played square with anybody in your life. So this is where you get yours. You can sail for Europe in the morning, if you like. Williams is going to take one berth. The rest of us don't want to go. Little old United States is good enough for us."

"Keep him there, while I go and see if the jewels are all right," put in Jeremiah Johnson, turning away from Drumm on the sofa. "Wait while I find the key."

Johnson examined the clothing of the helpless Stanton as coolly as if he had been playing with a big dog. He took no notice of the continual protestations of the rascal, but went from pocket to pocket without seeming to hear him, until he had his fingers on the key.

"Here it is, Yokohama! Want to come with me to the bedroom, to make sure I don't play any monkey tricks on you?"

"No," growled Yokohama Bill. "It isn't necessary. You wouldn't dare to rob me. You know I'd flatten you out till you looked like an old snow shovel if you did anything like that. Go and get the stuff and bring it here, just as it is. I'll watch Stanton."

Jeremiah Johnson went out to obey the order. Yokohama Bill heard the key rattle in the lock of the bedroom door.

Then there was a smothered shriek from Johnson, followed by two muffled bumps.

"Hello, there! Johnson!" bawled Yokohama Bill. "What's coming off?"

There was no answer.

CHAPTER XI.

BACK FROM THE DEAD.

The silence of Jeremiah Johnson after his strange cry and the peculiar bumps rather puzzled Yokohama Bill.

He stood over Stanton, looking down at him as if to

ask him what it meant, until he could tell, by the bewildered look in that cowardly ruffian's face, that he did not know what was going on, except that he understood Jeremiah Johnson had gone to the bedroom to take all the Wat Chang jewels.

For a moment or two Yokohama Bill hesitated. Then he decided that he must find out what had happened to Jeremiah Johnson, even though Ralph Stanton did get to his feet.

After all, it would be easy to subdue Stanton again. Yokohama Bill was not afraid that that jellyfish individual would cause any real trouble.

"You stay here till I come back, Grantley!" he whispered fiercely, as he shook his fist in Stanton's face. "If you try to get away, I'll change the look of your map."

Without even taking the trouble to look back, Yokohama Bill went out of the room, closed the door, and moved along the dark private hall, out of sight.

Stanton lay on the floor for about a minute after Yokohama had vanished. Then he got up slowly, first on his knees, and, by slow degrees, to his feet.

He gazed down at Drumm, and shivered. There was a waxlike aspect in Drumm's face and about his supine fingers, that Stanton did not like. He wished Drumm looked more lifelike and natural.

"So they are going to try and rob me of those Wat Chang jewels, are they?" he muttered, through his clenched teeth. "After all my work in getting them out of the Great Pagoda in Bangkok, they think I'll let them take everything away from me. Well, they'll find out."

He felt in his pocket for a weapon.

Nothing was there. He had not troubled to carry a pistol or knife when he left Joy View. His idea was that this was a time when brains and cunning would have to win the battle.

"That would have been all right if there had not been this dirty treachery," he muttered. "I'll kill that Yokohama Bill! If he is big, that does not make him any better able to stand against a bullet—or even a knife, if the stroke is a good one."

He thought of the stroke he had inflicted between the shoulders of Asa Beveridge, and shuddered. He never had forgotten that deed of his in the jungle of Siam, up the Meinam River.

But why did that reminiscent shudder continue until it became a tremble, which shook him from head to foot, so that he had to cling to the back of a chair to save himself from falling?

His gaze was fixed upon the floor just under the edge of the sofa, and it seemed as if he couldn't look away from that spot, try as he would.

"Save me!" he muttered. "Is it always going to haunt me? I don't believe it. That's just another of those delusions we hear about and see in medical books. I'm sure of it. I'll—I'll—prove it!"

He uttered these last few words in an awful shriek as he darted at the floor under the sofa, his face close to the still, white features of Joseph Drumm.

As his fingers clutched under the sofa, he shrieked again, and drew back, his face convulsed in horror.

In his fingers he held the selfsame knife that had lain on the white blotting pad in his desk at Joy View two days before!

"It is the same knife!" he groaned. "It is the knife

that I used to kill Beveridge! What shall I do? What shall I do?"

Clasping the knife to his bosom, as he folded his two arms across his chest, and not knowing what he was about, he sat in the chair on the back of which he had rested, and rocked to and fro in agony.

"What have I done to deserve this," he moaned. "What have I done? Other men have had to kill, and they haven't suffered like this. Why must I be the one?"

He remained thus for nearly a minute. Then, by a strong effort of his will, he got to his feet, still holding the rusty knife in his right hand without being aware of the fact, and went to the door.

The latch was a little tight, and it was only after two or three hard tugs that Stanton was able to pull the door open.

"There may be some one on the other side, holding it," he muttered. "I don't care! Nothing can frighten me now. I have seen the worst thing in this world when I found that knife under the sofa, and——"

Open came the door, and Stanton started back with a gurgling cry of horror compared with which his scream when he saw the knife under the sofa was sweet music.

"Keep away!" he groaned, as, with hands outstretched and thrust before him, averted head and trembling limbs, he retreated into the room. "Keep away! You have no right here! Keep away!"

As Ralph Stanton crept slowly backward into the room, a man, with folded arms, walked slowly after him, never removing accusing eyes from the other's flabby face.

"Keep away!" moaned Stanton.

It seemed as if he could not say anything else. All he wanted was to be let alone.

"Keep away!"

Still, the tall man, with a cadaverous face, high cheek bones, and deep-set, blazing eyes, followed the crawling, cowardly Stanton farther into the room.

At last Stanton could retreat no farther. He was against the sofa, on which lay the figure of Drumm.

The tall man walked another step and then stopped, regarding Stanton with an expression that seemed to say he had come for vengeance, and he meant to have it, regardless of all else.

"Keep away!"

"No, John Grantley!" came from the lips of the tall, cadaverous man in sepulchral accents. "I will not go away!"

"What do you want?" faltered Stanton.

"I will not go away, John Grantley," repeated the tall stranger. "I have come through jungle and forest and mountain and desert and plain and valley! By land and sea, through storm, shipwreck, and pestilence, I have come. I have fought and struggled and suffered the agonies of the cursed of heaven! And all for what?"

"I don't know!" murmured Stanton, in low, awed tones. "For what have you done all this?"

"You know who I am?" demanded the stranger.

"No."

"Don't lie, John Grantley. 'Don't lie!'"

"I mean it can't be you!"

"It is I."

"But—it can't be," persisted Stanton, who seemed to have gained some of the courage that springs from utter terror. "You—you—are dead. I saw you there—dead!"

"Yet I am here."

"It must be your ghost, then!" murmured Stanton, hardly making a sound as he spoke.

A hollow laugh rang through the apartment, and Stanton, with a shriek, threw his arms across the table and let his head drop upon them, as he sank into a chair.

His nerves had given way. He could not speak,

Still the tall man continued mercilessly:

"This is the suffering you deserve, John Grantley! You stabbed Asa Beveridge in a jungle in Siam months ago. Now it is that same Asa Beveridge who tells you that you shall have no more happiness in this world. Happiness? You shall not have even peace."

Ralph Stanton groaned without looking up.

"I am Asa Beveridge!" continued the tall man. "Whether I am ghost or flesh and blood matters nothing to you! I am here to punish you, and the punishment shall be the worst that could befall you."

Another groan was the only sign the trembling wretch gave that showed he heard and understood.

"You have stolen the jewels from the Great Pagoda of Bangkok—Wat Chang, that has brought all the way to New York one of the ministers of the Siamese government. It is I who have told him where to find them. I was almost as bad as you at one time—not quite, thank Heaven!"

Asa Beveridge was now speaking like an ordinary man, albeit an angry one, and Stanton mustered courage to look up. The mention of the jewels made him anxious. His avarice was a stronger passion even than superstitious fear.

"Those jewels have all been gathered by one who will pass them to the agent of the King of Siam."

"Who is this person?" suddenly demanded Stanton, getting to his feet.

He had been gradually composing himself, and he realized now that Asa Beveridge was only himself, after all. He had escaped from the jungle somehow, and now was in New York, trying to frighten him.

Bah! What was there to fear?

Just as Stanton had come to this conclusion, there entered a man of stern features and calm demeanor, who never took his eyes off Stanton.

"Nick Carter!" gasped Stanton. "How did you get here?"

"Never mind!" was Nick's reply. "You forgot the fire escape. Now you will answer, not only for stealing these Wat Chang jewels, but also for holding a prisoner in your house, Joy View, at Stonecrag-on-the-Hudson, last night, a young lady——"

"A young lady?" broke in Beveridge. "What do you mean, Carter? What was the young lady's name?"

There was an appealing look in Ralph Stanton's eyes. It meant that he begged Carter not to go on.

But the detective had no mind to spare the contemptible scoundrel in any way. So he continued calmly: "The young lady was Miss Edith Beveridge."

That was enough for Asa Beveridge. He lifted the flabby rascal from his chair and flung him to the floor so heavily that he stayed there.

His head had struck a corner of the heavy table leg, and it was twenty minutes later when he recovered consciousness. He came to, just in time to be conveyed down to the patrol wagon that Nick Carter had summoned.

"What shall we do with this man?" asked one of the policemen, pointing to Joseph Drumm, on the sofa.

There was a handkerchief over Drumm's face. It had been quietly placed there by the detective some time before.

"There is nothing that can be done with him except to leave him here till the coroner comes," replied Nick. "Heart trouble was the cause of it, but there will have to be a regular medical certificate."

* * * * *

The Wat Chang jewels were restored to the Siamese government, less a few that had been turned into cash by John Grantley—alias Ralph Stanton.

Señor Ribiero returned to Bangkok with all the jewels stolen from the mines as well as those removed from the images in the Great Pagoda.

He wrote to Nick Carter, when he got home, saying that he had received a royal welcome, and that his king wished he could heap more honors upon him. The only thing that prevented it was the fact that Ribiero was already the most important personage in the kingdom of Siam, next to his majesty himself.

Jeremiah Johnson, Yokohama Bill, and John Grantley are all serving long terms in prison. Among the other convicts they see occasionally, in the shops, at exercise, or at mess, are the members of the Loop gang who got away from Siam with the precious stones stolen by Red Clancy.

Asa Beveridge has become a highly respected business man. He is in the importing house where his sister Edith was for years a cashier.

She is not there now. Such a nice girl could not avoid matrimony very long. She is the wife of a son of one of the partners in the importing house.

Sandow, the ape, is still the pet of Asa Beveridge, who lives out in the country, within commuting distance of New York, and he declares the chief reason for his living in the suburbs is that he can be able to give Sandow a nice place to enjoy himself among the trees.

"A million dollars would not have been too much for you to get for that case," observed Chick to his chief one day not long after Señor Ribiero had left New York. "I hope that is what you got."

"What I got does not much matter," answered the detective, with a smile. "It was enough, at all events. Where I got my real reward was in sending that bunch of rascals to prison."

THE END.

In the next issue of this weekly, No. 130, out March 6th, you will find a story that tells of the efforts made by Nick Carter and his assistants in running down the murderer of an operator in a railroad signal tower. The title of the story is "The Crime in the Tower; or, Nick Carter's Finger-print Clew."

AN ARITHMETICAL PARADOX.

In an old Hindu manuscript was found this remarkable decision of a dispute: Two travelers sat down to dinner; one had five loaves, the other had three. A stranger passing by desired permission to eat with them, which they agreed to. The stranger dined, laid down eight pieces of money, and departed. The proprietor of the five loaves took up five pieces and left three for the other, who ob-

jected, and claimed half. The case was brought before the chief magistrate, who gave the following judgment:

"Let the owner of the five loaves have seven pieces of money, and the owner of the three loaves one."

Now, strange as this decision may appear at first sight, it was perfectly just; for, suppose the loaves to have been divided into three equal parts, making twenty-four parts of all the eight loaves, and each person to have eaten a third share; therefore, the stranger must have eaten seven parts of the person's bread who had the five loaves—or fifteen parts when divided—and only one of him who contributed three loaves, or nine parts.

ON A DARK STAGE.

By ROLAND ASHFORD PHILLIPS.

(This interesting story was commenced in No. 127 of NICK CARTER STORIES. Back numbers can always be obtained from your news dealer or the publishers.)

CHAPTER VII.

THE START.

Klein had been a professional actor for three years. Beginning in San Francisco, with a second-class "rep" company, he had gradually and resolutely worked himself into the position of second leads in a well-known Los Angeles stock company. For two seasons—they lasted fifty-two weeks in this stock—he remained there, gaining profitable experience in the numerous rôles assigned to him, and considering himself fairly well established.

Being naturally ambitious, and somewhat elated over the many local notices received, he decided that New York needed him. So, despite the pleading of his stage manager and the warnings from the rest of the company, he handed in his two weeks' notice, bought himself an extensive wardrobe, and climbed blithely aboard the *Sunset Limited*.

He landed in that mecca of all meccas, theatrically speaking, to find that a "coast defender," as the Western actors are termed, might as well have mentioned previous experience gained in a small-town dramatic school; as far as such recommendations went to influencing the cynical and indifferent New York managers. He found, as had the majority of others, that there is an invisible, yet none the less exacting, line dividing the theatrical East and West.

Indignant at first, because the managers had not read the "brilliant" notices in the Los Angeles papers, or given any consideration to his three years of stock experience in the land of California, Klein swallowed his pride—which is a difficult and humiliating thing for an actor to do—and accepted with open arms the first engagement offered him—a character part in a third-season production. They opened in Trenton, New Jersey, and closed in Detroit; and never in his wildest fancy had he imagined so many unknown and unbelievable one-night stands existed. But he stuck gamely through it all, and finished the season, hurrying back to New York when the company disbanded.

His second assault of the agencies, even with the bitter experience learned, offered him little encouragement. The season had been a bad one—the usual wail of the managers in May—and summer stock jobs, at about half

winter salary, seemed to be the best things offered. Even these were few and far between, and one day when Madern had given him a tip on the Hudson Stock manager being in town and looking for good people, Klein determined to land the engagement.

As things turned out, he did neither. Delmar had long been a friend of his, since the balmy days in Los Angeles. With Klein, a deserving friend stood head and shoulders above all else; and day before yesterday, when they met for the first time in months, Klein was more than willing to give up the tip, and allow Delmar to get in first.

The outcome had been so unexpected, unpleasant, and startling that Klein had a hard time convincing himself that the things had really happened. With Delmar murdered, and himself practically a fugitive from the law, Destiny had indeed been busy.

It was with much concern that Klein, alone in his room, began to figure up his assets. It was not encouraging to find these consisted of a fair amount of wardrobe and just sixty-three dollars in real money.

"I can get a night boat to Hudson," he said to himself. "And it's much cheaper than rail. Just what I'll do when I get there is another matter. However," he added, starting to pack his belongings, "it won't be healthy for me to remain in New York under the present circumstances—and I think I'll find plenty of things to engage my attention when I get to Hudson."

He reached the wharf on time, and went aboard. Ten minutes later a colored porter had deposited his suit case in a tiny stateroom of the big Fall River steamer *Providence*. Klein took a seat on the hurricane deck, lighted a cigar, and gave himself up to plans for the accomplishment of the task he had undertaken.

Presently, with the frantic snarl of a deep-toned whistle, the big boat quivered, and began moving out of her slip, swinging majestically in a wide curve through the clutter of harbor traffic, and starting proudly down the river. Klein beheld with interest the wonderful sky line of the city resplendent now under the golden haze of the low sun. Rounding the Battery, where the warm green made a sharp and pleasing contrast to the wilderness of steel and stone, the white boat entered the East River, passing under the vast arch of the Brooklyn Bridge.

Klein remained on deck until dusk, watching the ever-changing shore line as it gradually receded. Lights sprang into life on either coast. A gong sounded, and he went inside. An orchestra was playing in the big saloon. Klein passed on down the wide staircase, and entered the dining room, forward, where, under the soft glow of shaded electrics, the snowy tables invited him. He ordered a rather extravagant dinner, considering the state of his finances, and the none too bright prospect that was his.

CHAPTER VIII.

A LATE PASSENGER.

When Irving Tod had finished his vivid recital, and Reese, the rewriter, had passed it along to the city editor, the colt reporter hurried out of the newspaper shop and started for his apartment in Madison Avenue.

A bachelor apartment in Madison Avenue, especially in the block bounded by Forty-first and Forty-second Streets, was hardly in keeping with a new reporter's job at twenty

dollars a week. However, as Tod had the income from his father's big estate, he surrounded himself with what luxury he could command. The weekly reminder that he had a job on the *Morning News* was invested in flowers and candy for Claire Reed, daughter of the city editor.

Tod had been on the *Morning News* three months, and had covered weddings and funerals and chased "obits"—that is, obtained the facts from the mourning family concerning some person about whom the paper wished to print an obituary notice. He yearned for a chance to do a big "story." Upon the night of the Delmar murder, Tod, by mere chance happening to be in the office, was commissioned to go with Reese.

Reese saw an opportunity for a feature such as the *News* liked; Tod, more personally interested—it was his first murder case—had deserted the star man, to the delight of the star man, and embarked upon an investigation of his own. While Reese and Mrs. Wold and the police were down in the hall, Tod entered Delmar's room, and proceeded to dig up "evidence."

The most important bit he discovered, and one he thought little of at the time, was a notebook Delmar had removed from his pocket and placed upon his dresser. This book contained, besides a miscellaneous jumble of figures, a list of names and addresses and telephone numbers. He picked it up and dropped it into his pocket, just as Reese came into the room. Nothing was said about it, and nothing was thought about it, in fact, until the second day after his interview with Mr. Reed. In removing his coat, the little book dropped to the floor.

"Hello!" Tod exclaimed, running through the pages. "This is luck. Delmar's address book!" He grew serious. "The names in here are probably the names of his friends—therefore, as the suspected murderer was a friend of Delmar, it is quite possible that his name and address is on some of these pages."

This deduction so impressed Tod with his own cleverness that he began hurried preparations to follow up the clues. Before leaving his apartment, however, he penned these lines to Claire:

"I am on the eve of a great adventure. Your father has insulted me. I am going to prove to him and to you that I am worthy. Danger threatens me—but fear nothing. Be brave. I will conquer. IRVING TOD."

This letter he reread and sealed; then he rang for his valet.

"Bronson," he said, as the man appeared between the heavy curtains in obedience to his ring, "please mail this letter at once. And Bronson," he added, "I may be gone several days. If any one should call, tell them—nothing."

"Yes, sir." The man hesitated. "And you will be wanting your bags, sir?"

"Quite right." Tod paced back and forth across the room, his face gravely set, his arms folded. "You had better pack them all. Have them ready for me by six o'clock."

"Begging your pardon, sir," the man spoke up, deeply concerned, "but has—has anything serious happened?"

Tod waved an indifferent hand, interrupting him:

"Perhaps, Benson! Perhaps! Who can tell how serious a matter faces me! Those in the profession of journalism are never certain what to-morrow will bring forth. If there is danger ahead—I will face it, Benson!"

The man withdrew, much impressed by this speech. Half an hour later Tod was out of the house. By the time he had walked for an hour, he discovered that six of the twelve names found in Delmar's address book were those of theatrical agents. The seventh proved to be that of a boarding-house proprietor, while the eighth was a pawnbroker.

After these were marked off as hopeless, four names remained, all of which were in the Long Acre Square neighborhood. A glance at the man who answered to the first name was enough for Tod. He was bald-headed and cranky, and came shuffling to the door in a dirty bath robe and slippers. Tod excused himself and got away. Out on the street again, he turned to his book, and looked at the first of the three remaining names. He read:

"Hobart Klein, Morosco Stock Company, Los Angeles."

A line had been drawn through the address, and beneath it, in pencil, was written:

"The Turning Point Company, en route. See route list, *Morning Telegraph*."

"That's encouraging," muttered Tod, dropping the book back to his pocket, and, turning his footsteps in the direction of the *Telegraph* office. "The fellow looked like an actor, all right."

In the newspaper office on Eighth Avenue and Fiftieth Street, Tod was handed the file for the current month. The Sunday issues contained the route list of nearly every company of any importance. He found "The Turning Point" listed, but the dates were fully a month old.

"Company must have closed then," Tod announced. "Of course the fellow came on to New York. Probably been here a month. Now let me see who had that troupe."

The name of the management was easily learned, and to their offices, in the Long Acre Building, the expectant detective hurried.

Yes, Mr. Hobart Klein was with their company during the season. His town address? Well, he was in the office a fortnight ago, and left a forwarding address for his mail. Would that do? It certainly would, Tod answered. So, five minutes later, he was ringing the bell of a brownstone front, midway between Broadway and Sixth Avenue, in Forty-fifth Street. The woman who answered it admitted that Mr. Klein had lived in her house, but that he had left barely half an hour previous.

Would she give the caller a description of the late roomer? The landlady regarded Mr. Tod with a suspicious eye, and Mr. Tod, in turn, quick to grasp the situation, pressed a bank note into the woman's hand. Then she became talkative. Mr. Klein had lived in her house for the past month. He always paid his rent promptly, and appeared to be a very respectable sort of gentleman.

"He's in the show business," she went on to state, "and generally they ain't the best kind of folks for gettin' money from."

"But his description?" urged Tod. "Was he a chap about my age and build—somewhat older? Did he have gray eyes? Was he wearing a blue suit to-day, and a soft hat?"

"That's him exactly," the landlady responded, smiling.

Then she proceeded to enumerate other points. Tod's heart kept pounding faster and faster.

"And he didn't get home night before last until very

late," she said. "It's been the first time I can remember. I saw him in the hall, and he didn't seem himself. And he came in about an hour or two ago. He was all excited—and had some newspapers with him. I heard him walkin' around a lot in his room, and pretty soon he comes down to call an expressman, and says he's going away. I was so surprised I didn't know what to do—'cause he'd paid me for a week only yesterday. Then I heard him tellin' the man to take his trunk down to some dock. I asked him if he wasn't satisfied with his room, and he——"

"Where's the expressman?" broke in Tod, growing more and more excited.

"Right over on the corner. Maybe he's back by this time. If you know of any nice gentleman that would like a room——"

But Tod had heard enough, and was running down the steps before the landlady could catch her breath. He found the expressman—or, at least, his office, and from a boy in charge learned that a trunk had been taken from a number corresponding to Klein's, and that it was to be delivered at the Fall River docks.

Things were happening so swiftly that the hopeful detective's head was spinning. There could be no mistaking now. This Klein, actor, could be none other than the man he had cornered in the Albany Hotel, and who escaped!

Swinging around the corner, Tod rushed to the nearest taxicab stand, leaped into the first cab, and ordered the driver to burn up the asphalt between there and the Fall River docks.

"There'll be a five-spot extra in it for you if I get there before the boat pulls out," he said, realizing, after a quick glance at his watch, that the distance had to be covered in a scant twenty minutes. To himself he said: "I think I'm some reporter, in spite of what old Reed says. I'll show him a thing or two."

The promise of a five-dollar bonus had the usual effect on the chauffeur. Just as the gangplank of the *Providence* was on the point of being rolled ashore, Tod dashed breathlessly across it, and fell into the open arms of a grinning deck hand.

And while Hobart Klein, from the hurricane deck, was drinking in the glory of the sunset behind the Jersey hills, Irving Tod, reporter and self-commissioned detective, was interviewing the purser in relation to a stateroom.

CHAPTER IX.

THE STRANGER.

When Tod reached his stateroom—considerably upset and annoyed because there were no larger cabins with baths to be had—he sat down on the edge of his berth, and began to plan out just what his next move should be. Of course, it was inconvenient to be without a valet, but this predicament might have been endurable had he had the opportunity of sending for his baggage.

To be compelled to wear the same suit, unpressed, for two days, and not have his usual bath in the morning, was irritating to such a fastidious young man as Irving Tod. But, then, he told himself, with a martyrlike air, a professional man in the pursuit of his duties must submit to discomfort.

"First of all," he said, after a half hour's serious re-

flection, "I've got to make sure this man Klein is on board, and, second, I've got to make sure he is the chap I want—the chap who fooled me yesterday. After I'm certain on these points, the rest will be easy. I'll keep under cover, and in the morning when we dock at Fall River, I'll either confront him and demand his story—or, if absolutely necessary, have him arrested."

With this much determined upon, Tod made his way cautiously out of the stateroom, and reached the lower deck. Here, through the big windows, he could watch the occupants of the smoking saloon, and, at the same time, because of the deepening gloom, remain screened from observation himself.

As it grew darker outside, he pressed nearer the big windows, watching the passengers descending to the dining saloon. A few minutes after the dinner gong sounded, and while he was eagerly, hopefully peering into each face, his heart gave a sudden jump.

There, walking swiftly across the smoking-room floor, was the one he wanted!

"That's the man," he murmured to himself. "That's Klein. Guess I'm safe in sending a wire to Reed now." His eyes sparkled, and the color rushed to his cheeks. "I'll have that fellow in New York before to-morrow noon. And then—for my story!"

With this, he turned and made his way back to his stateroom.

At the same time, a tall man in a closely buttoned raincoat, who had been watching the reporter narrowly, tossed his cigar over the rail, made certain that Tod went to his stateroom, and then calmly went inside and descended to the dining room.

At the entrance of this room he hesitated a second, casting his eyes from wall to wall. Suddenly they wavered and stopped, and a smile came to his thin lips just as the colored head waiter approached him.

The stranger bent over and whispered a few magic words into the other's ear. Hobart Klein, suddenly looking up from his plate, beheld the other chair at his table being moved back, while a distinguished-looking passenger, discarding a raincoat and cap, was preparing to sit opposite him.

"With your permission," the stranger said politely.

"Certainly," Klein answered, taken aback slightly by the ceremonious announcement.

"My one aversion to travel," the newcomer said, seating himself, "is being compelled to occupy the same table with unresponsive strangers." He smiled faintly. "I like to pick my own company."

"Honored, I am sure," murmured Klein.

"Not at all, my friend. It is all my pleasure." He turned, as the waiter placed a pad and pencil beside him on the table.

"Possibly you will join me in——"

"Nothing to drink, thank you."

The other bowed. "As you wish."

Klein might have laughed, mentally, of course, at the apparent affectation indulged in by his table companion, had not his appearance been in keeping with his speech. Klein studied him curiously as he wrote out his order in a firm, round hand.

The stranger was exceedingly thin, yet not too tall, and his face, marvellously free from wrinkles, was as smooth and white as a youth's of twenty. His eyes were coal-black, and possessed that intangible something which

writers like to term "probing." When they were fastened upon him, Klein felt in much the same way as when facing a camera. It came to him that those inscrutable black orbs were lenses, and that every move he made, and every expression that crossed his face, was instantaneously recorded and printed in the stranger's brain. Those wonderful eyes gave Klein an uncomfortable feeling at first—in the light of what had passed during the last few days; but this was forgotten when once the other resumed the conversation.

When they had finished eating, and the stranger had insisted upon Klein smoking one of his cigars, the former's talk assumed a more personal tone.

"Am I not correct in surmising you to be an actor?" he ventured to ask.

"That is what I like to consider myself," Klein answered.

They both laughed. "It is too bad," said the other, "that we have not different and varying degrees in that profession. The word actor allows so much latitude. In the vernacular of the stage, Mansfield was an actor—and yet, a man who directs a troupe of educated seals may be spoken of in the same term."

"Or a trick bicycle rider," added Klein.

"Exactly." The stranger's eyes clouded in a reminiscent manner. "I remember when we met before—" he caught himself as Klein frowned.

"When *we* met before?" Klein broke out questioningly.

The stranger shook his head. "I—I had forgotten," he returned. "I—I was thinking of some one else. Anyway, what I had to say was of little value. Shall—shall we go upstairs?"

A few minutes later they were seated in big easy-chairs in the smoking saloon. The strains of the orchestra came floating down the broad staircase, interrupted now and again by the intermittent drone of the smokers.

A portly old gentleman was crossing the smoking-room floor, and Klein noticed that his companion, the stranger, was eying him rather closely, and with evident interest. Perhaps ten minutes later a girl appeared at the top of the broad staircase which led to the upper saloon, and, catching sight of the old gentleman, who by this time had found a chair, beckoned anxiously. As the latter acknowledged the call, and was climbing the stairs to join the girl, the stranger tossed away his cigar and arose to his feet.

"You'll pardon me for a moment," he said. "I—I have left something in my stateroom."

He hurried away, and Klein noticed, not a little curiously, that he was following the portly old gentleman and the girl who had called to him.

CHAPTER X.

ON THE HURRICANE DECK.

Klein finished his cigar, which, by the way, was an exceedingly good one, speculating meanwhile over the appearance and actions of the giver. What a peculiar man this stranger was! And what marvelous eyes he possessed! Klein could not rid himself of those probing, coal-black orbs. They seemed to be staring out at him from every wall.

Presently, after a vain attempt to rid himself of these thoughts, he got up, saw that it was ten o'clock, and resolved to take a walk around the decks before turning

in. A lively wind met him as he opened the door. The boat, plowing through rougher water now, was beginning to roll slightly. Overhead, the moon was barely visible through the heavy clouds. Neither shore line could be seen, although to his right, on the Connecticut side, Klein discerned the dimly flashing signals of a lighthouse.

While Klein was pacing the deck, Irving Tod was in the wireless room. He had just written, and the operator was already crashing out, a message addressed to his city editor. It read:

"MR. REED, *Morning News*: Got my man. Will have him arrested at Fall River in the morning. Will wire full details in time for noon edition. TOM."

The slim, black-eyed stranger who had carried on a conversation with Klein in the dining saloon, and later in the smoking room, and who had watched as Tod stepped into the wireless cabin, now slipped from his place of concealment, and followed the reporter.

"You can get Newport for me, I suppose?" he asked sharply of the operator.

"Yes, sir. Right away," was the response.

"How long before the boat docks there?"

"We're due at two-thirty a. m."

The stranger appeared to weigh some matter carefully for the moment, tapping his long and white fingers on the desk. Tod was watching him with undisguised interest. Finally, as if his mind was made up, the stranger seized pencil and paper, and dashed off a message. This he read and reread, then pushed it across to the waiting operator.

"Of course, my man," the stranger announced guardedly, "this is confidential."

"Certainly, sir."

The operator glanced at the two lines. Tod, from the corner of his eye, did the same. The stranger's attention seemed to be directed elsewhere. This is what the operator read:

"CHIEF OF POLICE, Newport, R. I.: Suspect aboard *Providence*. Will take him off at Newport. JARGE."

The operator prepared to flash out the message, and Tod moved slowly toward the door of the cabin.

"Just one moment, my man," broke in the stranger. "I—I will cancel that message. It will be better, I think." He laid a half dollar upon the desk. "Sorry to have troubled you."

"No trouble at all," answered the operator, pocketing the piece of silver. "If I can help you in any way—"

The stranger stopped. Tod had left the cabin.

"Oh, by the way," began the stranger, as if he had suddenly remembered, "what was that young fellow doing here? Sending a message?"

"Yes, sir." The wireless operator seemed only too eager to explain. Undoubtedly the message which was not sent had a great deal to do with the operator's willingness to talk.

"He's a reporter, sir. A New York reporter. Just sent off a message. Here it is, sir."

The stranger glanced with an air of indifference at the few lines Tod had written to his city editor. Then, without a word, he turned and walked quickly out of the cabin.

"Gee!" muttered the wireless man. "There's something coming off to-night, all right. A plain-clothes shadow and a news chaser! Wonder if they're after the same guy?"

The stranger, once out in the open and now all but deserted saloon, moved at a slower pace. The orchestra had long since disappeared, as had the majority of women passengers. Here and there, sitting in the deep easy-chairs, a number of men were either reading the New York and Boston papers, or conversing in low tones.

Soft-footed stewards glided back and forth. Lights were being put out or dimmed. The steady throb, throb, of the engines became more and more distinct in the silence. At times the boat quivered; the timbers creaked.

The stranger walked forward where a broad staircase led to the hurricane deck, and several of the more desirable staterooms. Reaching there, he buttoned his coat firmly about his neck, and stepped through a narrow door out into the open air. A fierce gust of wind all but choked him, and he crouched in the shelter of a fire box for a moment in order to catch his breath. Then he walked along the deck, head down.

The doors of all the cabins situated here opened directly upon the deck. The stranger walked straight to a certain one of these and knocked. After a moment of silence the door was opened. The inquisitive face of the portly old gentleman who had left the smoking room early in the evening with the girl was disclosed.

"What is it?" he asked.

"You are Mr. Lydecker, I believe?" said the stranger.

"Yes."

The visitor leaned forward and drew back part of his coat, disclosing a badge. "I am a plain-clothes man, belonging to the boat. I would like to speak with you for a moment."

The door was opened, and the newcomer stepped in. The cabin was unusually wide, and contained a brass bedstead in place of berths.

The old gentleman, now frowning, motioned his guest to one of the two chairs. He had partly disrobed, and was wearing a heavy woolen smoking gown.

"I am sorry to trouble you, Mr. Lydecker," announced the stranger. "But the fact is I have been asked by the captain to keep my eye on your cabin. We have been troubled lately by several puzzling robberies. Staterooms have been entered, and the occupants robbed. As you are quite well known, Mr. Lydecker, and are in the habit of carrying not only money, but jewelry as well, I considered it my duty to inform you confidentially, and also to insist that you deposit with the purser all valuables you might have upon your person."

Mr. Lydecker seemed relieved. "That's very kind of you, sir," he said. "Being engaged in the jewelry business, and traveling a great deal between New York and my country place at Hudson, I am often compelled to assume grave responsibility in the matter of carrying valuables. The fact is, I had noticed you earlier in the evening—that is, noticed you were following my daughter and myself about, and I was rather nervous. Of course"—he smiled now—"I understand your purpose. I have nothing of much value upon my person, and as for my daughter, I warned her to deposit what jewelry she had with the purser."

The detective raised his brows. "Which she did?" he asked abruptly.

"I have every reason to believe so," the other replied.

The stranger allowed a faint smile to hover about his thin lips. And then, even as Mr. Lydecker was on the

point of speaking, he placed a hand in his coat pocket, and brought to light a small chamois bag.

"Bless my soul!" was the exclamation that fell from Mr. Lydecker's lips.

The detective untied the strings, and dumped the contents of the bag upon the coverlid of the bed.

"Those are familiar to you?" he asked.

"Why—why, bless me," stammered the amazed Mr. Lydecker. "They are—are my daughter's."

A bracelet, two brooches, a tiny gold watch, heavily studded with diamonds, and half a dozen valuable rings were lying there on the white coverlid.

"Your daughter, Mr. Lydecker, foolishly left this bag under her pillow when she took a stroll on the deck. I came upon the thief just as he had left the stateroom. For certain reasons, we want to keep this matter under cover. You understand, sir. I can rely upon you, Mr. Lydecker, to say nothing of the robbery?"

"Most assuredly," the other returned. "Most assuredly, sir. And—and I cannot tell you how deeply I appreciate this—this——"

"Not at all, Mr. Lydecker," interrupted the detective. "It is all in the day's work."

"I hadn't the slightest doubt but that my daughter placed these trinkets with the purser."

"I imagined as much. However, I trust this will teach her a lesson. I hope there are none of the"—he paused and smiled, using the other's description—"trinkets missing."

Mr. Lydecker bent down and picked over the articles, checking them off aloud. "Not a thing gone. Not a thing," he repeated. "This—this is quite marvelous." He straightened, facing the detective.

"You must accept something more than thanks——" he began, reaching in his pocket for his wallet.

But the stranger stayed his hand. "No, no, Mr. Lydecker," he said. "I have only done my duty."

"Then you will at least tell me your name," the older man said, apparently disappointed at the other's unexpected refusal of a deserved reward. "I want to remember you."

"I shall consider it an honor, Mr. Lydecker," announced the detective warmly, and at the same time producing a case from which he selected a card. "This will introduce me."

Mr. Lydecker accepted the card, read the name engraved upon it, and promptly held out his hand.

"You are a credit to your profession, Mr. Jarge. I shall not forget this very commendable act, I assure you."

Mr. Jarge took the extended hand and pressed it.

"I may some day call upon you to remember that promise, Mr. Lydecker," he said quietly. And all the time his coal-black, inscrutable eyes were mentally recording innumerable pictures of the flushed face before him.

"Good night."

With this he turned, went out of the door, bowed his head against the wind, and tramped back to the saloon.

CHAPTER XI.

BLUE EYES AND BLACK.

Hobart Klein had long since deserted the deck of the boat, and sought the seclusion of his narrow stateroom, where, divesting himself of his clothes, he thankfully crawled between the sheets, and was soon asleep.

Meanwhile Jarge, the detective, after his interview with Mr. Lydecker, lighting a cigar, strolled down to the all but empty smoking room. A curiously contented smile hovered about his thin lips, and seemed to deepen the fathomless mystery in his eyes. An observer, happening upon him suddenly, might have deduced from this that the detective was a man well satisfied with life—which, if the truth had been known, was exactly Jarge's state of mind.

Sitting there alone, enjoying his cigar, the smoke curling lazily toward the ceiling, Jarge recalled an old adage—one taught him in his school days, and which seemed particularly appropriate at the present time.

"Well begun is half done," he quoted; then chuckled: "I wonder if there is any truth in that saying?"

His soliloquy was interrupted by the approach of a young man with very blue eyes, who sank into an adjoining chair, with the remark:

"I beg your pardon, sir, but might I have a few minutes' conversation?"

Jarge waved away the smoke from before his face, and turned his head. "Certainly, Mr. Tod."

The reporter betrayed his surprise. "I—I see you know me," he said. "So there is no need of my introducing myself."

"You're a reporter from the *New York Morning News*," Jarge went on. "You barely caught this boat when it left the dock to-night. I noticed you. You are following a certain passenger, and you intend having him arrested when he lands at Fall River."

Tod's amazement increased. "That's it exactly," he replied. "But I hadn't the least idea you knew!"

"Knowing happens to be my business."

"Of course," Tod agreed, confused by the other's emphatic declaration. "I—I knew you were a detective—and that is why I—I—" He stammered to a pause, neglecting to add that he had learned this fact through reading the other's wireless an hour or so previous.

Jarge waited patiently for the perplexed reporter to continue. Finally, mustering all his courage, Tod resumed:

"I'm after a certain man on board this ship. It—it'll mean a great deal to me if I succeed in having him arrested at Fall River. His name is Hobart Klein, and he is occupying stateroom number three hundred. He is——"

"He is suspected of assailing a certain Delmar," Jarge interrupted, continuing the sentence without hesitation. "He was discovered shortly before the arrival of the police by the landlady of the rooming house, a Mrs. Wold. He was wearing the clothes of the man he attacked. He made an attack also on Mrs. Wold, and escaped."

"And—and——" Tod wavered.

"And yesterday he was found in the lobby of the Albany Hotel by a reporter of the *News*," broke in Jarge. "Once more he made his escape, after a terrific battle in a taxicab."

A sheepish grin spread over Tod's face. "I—I guess you know the whole story," he said. "Everything's correct except the last. I was the reporter who found him—but there was no battle. He simply proved to be the cleverer of us, and——"

"How can I be of any service to you?"

"Klein is wanted by the New York police. I must get him back there. I've promised my editor—I've already wired him. It will mean a great scoop for the *News*. I want to have the story ready for the morning edition."

"Barring the unexpected, of course," observed Jarge.

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Tod.

"Well, you should know, Mr. Tod. You read my message to-night in the wireless room—the message I intended sending to the Newport chief of police."

Tod flushed. The accusation, which of course was the truth, took him by surprise. He was not equal to carrying off the situation with a bluff. His face betrayed his thoughts.

"Then—then you—you are going to arrest this man?"

"At Newport, yes. We'll be there in another hour."

Tod looked crestfallen. Jarge smoked silently. Suddenly the reporter brightened.

"See here," he exclaimed, "this will fit in with my plans, all right! I'll get off with you at Newport. I can wire my story in to New York in time for the early edition. Once this Klein is in the hands of the police he'll confess. I'll get it all down, and scoop every other paper in New York." His eyes were sparkling. "You haven't any objection to that, have you?" he asked hopefully.

"It doesn't matter to me," Jarge answered. "If you want to get off with us at Newport I can't stop you. However," he added, "my prisoner will not be allowed to talk until after I have delivered him to the local police."

"Well," said Tod reluctantly, "it won't make much difference to me, just so long as no other reporter gets on the scent. I've simply got to have that story first."

This time, he joyfully told himself, nothing would miscarry. Klein, the suspect, was as good as arrested. Tod would be the first and the only reporter on the job. Failure was impossible! Why, Newspaper Row would ring with his praises to-morrow!

"I'll show old Reed," he muttered later. "He'll laugh on the other side of his mouth when he gets my story. Then he'll beg me to stay on the staff—and I'll snap my fingers in his face. This will end my newspaper work. I'll have proved my worth. Then Claire and I——" He drew in a deep and trembling breath, and gave himself up to the building of glorious air castles.

TO BE CONTINUED.

TOPSY-TURVY.

Here is a note about a man named Carl Maier, who possesses a peculiar accomplishment. We should think, however, a more valuable one would be the ability to write with both hands at once. But what Carl Maier can do is to begin a letter at the end, and then work backward to the beginning.

It seems just as easy for him to remember the words and letters of a sentence in reversed order as it is in their regular rotation. It is an easy matter for him to think backward, and, what is more astonishing, he writes upside down. The letters are all inverted as he looks at them when writing. And again, in performing this feat, which, one thinks, would require all the power and attention of his brain, he is not disturbed by carrying on a conversation with you, no matter how foreign the subject may be.

Maier's performance would make one almost believe the theory recently promulgated by a scientist, that we have double-barrel brains. If you repeat a sentence to Maier, no matter how long it may be, after hearing it once he will commence and write the sentence verbatim, starting at the last letter of the last word, and finishing it through to the first letter of the first word.

THE NEWS OF ALL NATIONS.

Longest Canoe Voyage Halted by Ice.

A stocky young fellow walked into a Chicago athletic club. Men turned to gaze at him, and little wonder. His cheeks and chin were covered with a curly brown beard. Under a multicolored sweater jacket he wore more sweaters and a knitted toque warmed his ears. A pair of laced lumberjack boots completed the outfit.

Six years ago Bob Zimmerman was a fancy diver and swimmer at the Central Y. M. C. A. and later at the Illinois Athletic Club. He was better than the usual run of aquatic athletes, and his coaches expected him to become a national champion. He dropped from sight one day and no one knew where he was living.

One day last fall—October 20th, to be exact—two young men leaped into a sixteen-foot canoe at Ottawa, Canada. One was Zimmerman, who carried credentials from the Montreal Athletic Association. The other was Fred C. Smith, of the Wanderers' Club, of Halifax.

The pair plied husky arms and shoulders to the paddles, heading northward in the Ottawa River. All that day and for many days afterward they paddled until they shot into Lake Nipissing. From there they entered the French River and then came down to Georgian Bay and thence into Lake Huron, through the Mackinac Straits and down the east coast of Lake Michigan, until the other day they fought through ice into the Michigan City harbor. The rest of the journey into Chicago was completed on foot.

Coming down the east shore, they were forced to fight miniature icebergs, for continued west winds have piled the blocks fifteen feet along the east shore. They have abandoned their canoe at Michigan City, but will start again when the ice breaks in the spring, and plan to paddle back to Chicago, then down the river to the gulf, after which they will go through the Panama Canal—completing the longest canoe journey ever attempted.

Zimmerman is in wonderful physical condition, due to the open-air life he has lived during the past months.

Lays His Fall to Fast Pace.

"I tried to travel too fast a pace—a pace that kills. I stumbled and fell, and now I'm ready to take my medicine—no matter how bitter it may be. It's been a lesson I'll never forget."

Fred Atkisson, twenty-three years old, married recently, who was arrested and confessed to robbing the State Bank of Summersville, Mo., of \$3,000, expressed himself thus as he gazed with a far-away stare through the bars of a cell at police headquarters.

When Detectives Parish Nickel and Peter Spellman found Atkisson in his room at the Kupper Hotel he had in his possession \$1,937 of the stolen money.

"You came just in time," the former bank bookkeeper told the detectives. "I was going to start for Alaska in a couple of hours."

According to Atkisson's statement to the police, he reset the time lock on the bank's vault, took \$3,000 and the girl he loved, and drove to Houston, Mo. There he was denied a marriage license, on account of the age of his sweetheart.

The bride of less than a month was Miss Ethel Harmon, seventeen years old, an unsophisticated country girl, who now is at her home in Summersville. The absconding husband believes his bride will stay with him through his trouble.

Atkisson had worked at the bank four years and was bookkeeper and assistant cashier. He blames all his trouble on trying to court a daughter of one of the directors of the bank, who, he says, is now married and living in Kansas City.

"It was trying to trot out of my class that got me started," the young absconder said. "I began stealing the first day I began working in the bank."

"Yes, there was a girl in the case—but not the dear little country girl I married and disgraced. Let me tell you, a pretty, wealthy girl who wants to have a good time is a great temptation to a forty-five-dollar-a-month bank clerk. I was trying to keep up with her when I started to work in the bank in which her father was a big stockholder."

"I began taking little dabs at first. Then I took more, and finally, after the rich girl had married another fellow, I decided to plunge. I was in so bad that I thought it was the only thing to do. But I just couldn't leave the girl I loved behind."

"It almost broke my heart when I did tell her. She is an innocent little girl. I bought her fine clothes and jewelry and she was so happy until she found out she had a crook for a husband."

"I did not spend my money foolishly. I do not drink to excess."

"I never took a drink, smoked a cigarette, or stole a penny in my life before I began going with the banker's daughter. She started me—she was a highflyer."

Aged People Die in Flames.

Four aged women burned to death when the Cambridge, Mass., City Home, a three-story structure in the North Cambridge district, was swept by fire late at night. Another woman was probably fatally burned and scores of the 238 inmates suffered from burns or shock, and were taken to hospitals. The property loss is estimated at about \$75,000.

The fire is thought to have been caused by spontaneous combustion in the paint room on the first floor. The flames rushed up through a dumb-waiter shaft to the sleeping quarters on the third floor. Firemen, policemen, and spectators assisted in carrying the inmates, most of whom were aged men and women, down fire escapes and ladders.

Crippled Woman a Live Reporter.

Mrs. Warren Johnson, of Mount Pleasant, Mich., is the oldest newspaper woman in Michigan and probably the oldest in the United States. At present, at the age of eighty-two, she is a reporter for the Isabella County Enterprise.

Mrs. Johnson began reporting long after she passed the forties and is still in the game, although she confines her activities to a neighborhood beat. As long as

she has been on the *Enterprise* she has never taken a vacation and never shirked her duties. Never a big story broke out on her beat but she had it cornered and hung out to dry before her adversary heard of it. She has seemed to have the inside track on everything.

Six months ago Mrs. Johnson was stricken with paralysis. The readers of the *Enterprise* learned of it with deep regret. They feared this would cause her withdrawal from the staff and the consequent absence of her spicy contributions. Not so, however, for she quickly rallied sufficiently to return to her work with Warren's assistance.

Sudden Tests of Engineers.

Engineers and firemen of Western railroads sprung a surprise witness at the hearing before the Federal wage-arbitration board in Chicago, when B. P. Young, a half-breed Indian and an engineer on the Kansas division of the Union Pacific, was called to reenforce the employees' opposition to "surprise" tests.

"I have had two surprise tests in the last year," explained Engineer Young. "I remember one, near New Cambria, Kan., where I swung around a curve at the rate of a mile a minute with a passenger train. The switch light, about 150 feet ahead of me, suddenly turned red. A man must have a strong heart to stand such a strain. For all that I knew at the time the entire train would have been hurled over the bank if it were not stopped."

The witness also testified Kansas legislators already had put in force a statute directed against the practice of surprise tests.

Height at Which Birds Fly.

"It is even more difficult to estimate height than distance, and when one reads how once again the height record has been broken by some daring aviator, one is puzzled how to realize what the figures of his record really mean. Well, at any rate, we have the birds as a standard of comparison," says the *London Chronicle*. "Compared with Mr. Raynham's recent 15,000 feet, the common birds of England are mere groundlings, for generally they fly at no greater height than 300 feet. When migrating, however, they mount higher, though even then the wild goose—the loftiest of them—seldom reaches 2,000 feet. The highest flyer in the world is the great condor, which sometimes rises five miles."

Oil "Struck" Thirty Years Before "Discovery."

The story of the finding of petroleum many years before the date of its discovery as generally given is told by J. M. Root, of Junction City, Kan., who had it from his grandmother many years ago. Mr. Root's grandmother, Mrs. Burns, was a member of a Scottish colony that came to Pennsylvania to settle, following persecutions by the British in Scotland. One of their number had been sent to America to pick out a location that resembled as nearly as possible their own Scottish highlands, and picked on Pennsylvania.

About ninety years ago, according to the story as told to Mr. Root by his grandmother, in this Pennsylvania settlement the settlers sank a deep well in quest of salt. They struck a thick, black fluid, according to Mrs. Burns' description, that came to the top of the well and overflowed onto the ground. In some manner it caught fire and burned up the well-digging machinery.

Those were the days of superstition, however, and by common agreement the settlers kept quiet regarding the wonderful fluid that would burn, for they knew it would be regarded as witchcraft, and feared that the story would work against their best interests. So they made no effort to ascertain what the fluid was. More than thirty years afterward petroleum was "discovered."

Wrong Man Hanged.

A murder mystery of twenty years ago was brought to life in a sensational manner when Chief of Police Gleason, of Chicago, received a letter declaring that a man found guilty of the crime and hanged went to his death an innocent man.

The man who was hanged for the murder was George Painter. The victim was Miss Alice Martin. She was beaten to death in a brutal manner May 18, 1891, and Painter was sent to the gallows January 26, 1894, protesting his innocence.

The letter to Chief Gleason was as follows:

"Will you try to find the address of any of the late George Painter's family? George was hanged in Chicago for the murder of Alice Martin. He was innocent of the crime. If you find any of the family, tell them to write me. I will take the stigma off the family. Very respectfully,
R. W. BAXTER, Buffalo, Ill."

The chief sent the letter to Captain W. P. O'Brien, of the detective bureau, who detailed Policewoman Alice Clement to make a search for relatives of Painter.

Miss Martin was murdered at 86 South Green Street. It was nearly a year before Painter was arrested and charged with the crime. Circumstantial evidence against him was strong, but he made a bitter fight for his life.

Painter declared his love for Alice Martin.

"If I killed Alice Martin—the girl I dearly loved, the woman I loved so much that I would almost commit a crime for her, I pray this minute, my last minute on earth—that the eternal God will put me into eternal hell," said Painter, on the scaffold.

"Look here, gentlemen, if there is one man among you who is an American, I say to you on his soul—on his soul, I say—see that the murderer of Alice Martin is found. Good-by."

A strange incident in connection with the hanging was recalled by Chief Gleason to-day.

"The rope broke once with Painter, according to my recollection," the chief said. "Painter fell to the cement floor. The rope was adjusted about his neck again, and he was hanged, still swearing he was innocent."

Rare Discovery Made.

With the head of an elephant, tusks measuring five feet, and a body resembling nothing else ever seen to come out of the sea, the body of an eighty-foot monster has been discovered off Isle Dernier, in the Mexican gulf.

The following telegram was sent by G. J. Labarre and A. M. Dupont, planters, to President Wilson, Representative Broussard, the Smithsonian Institute, and the Louisiana Conservation Commission:

"It is our pleasure to announce that Louisiana has furnished to history and science the most wonderful dis-

covery of centuries—a leviathan eighty feet long, sixteen feet wide, and weighing approximately ninety tons.

"It has the head of an elephant; eyes and jaws of the crocodile; the tongue is of jellylike construction, porous with suckers, and shaped like the trunk of an elephant; the tusks protrude in a straight line five feet and are eighteen inches wide at the jaw, and the thing apparently was a vegetarian."

Barnum Brown, of the staff of the American Museum of Natural History, has returned to New York City from the Red Sea River, in Alberta, with many notable trophies of an extended dinosaur hunt. He obtained more important specimens of the dinosaur, who flourished 3,000,000 years ago, and a larger collection than any ever assembled on previous trips of exploration. A car-load of fossils, which has arrived recently at the museum, will give the institution mounted skeletons of every known genus of the great dinosaur. The chief specimen is the first known skeleton of the ornithomimus.

"The ornithomimus was a carnivorous dinosaur, rather light in construction, but in general build resembling the great tyrannosaurus, largest of all the flesh eaters," said Mr. Brown. "We also found two complete examples of the monoclonyus, a horned, herbivorous creature, characterized by short orbital horns and nasal horns of unusual length, and about two-thirds of the size of the large triceratops. Our expedition also discovered a complete skeleton of the big ankylosaurus, which is equipped with a plated skull and which also has plates under its belly, a really unique specimen of the dinosaur."

One-patron Phone Company.

One lone telephone subscriber is all that the Haven Telephone Company, of Yoder, Kan., is serving. The company is serving him at a loss, but he refused to have his telephone disconnected. The company has appealed to the public utilities commission for relief.

This Parson Has Record of 2,500.

When Earl Marks, of Newberry, and Miss Bessie Price, of Sault Ste. Marie, were united in marriage, the event was of peculiar interest to the Reverend Thomas R. Easterday, of Newberry, Mich., the officiating clergyman. The nuptials brought up to an even 2,500 Mr. Easterday's record of wedding ceremonies performed. No other clergyman in the entire Northwest, it is believed, has tied as many matrimonial knots as he.

Mr. Easterday was ordained a Presbyterian minister fifty-two years ago. He has retired from the pulpit, but continues as the Soo's favorite "marrying parson," and his record has prospects of attaining the 3,000 mark. Mr. Easterday has for years been Chippewa's commissioner of schools. The duties of this position almost continually take him to all parts of the county.

Held Captive by Cannibals.

A "god of the cannibals" in Kongo Free State, Africa, for fifteen years, according to his own story, George Grant Washington, aged thirty-nine, a chemist of Elm Grove, near Wheeling, took out a license at Pittsburgh, Pa., to wed Mrs. Anna Fisher, 5504 Walnut Street. The ceremony was performed the same evening in the bride's home, and the couple then left for Baltimore, Md., where they will live.

Following a delay in procuring a marriage license, a

swarthy-skinned man of small stature, regaled the clerks at the marriage-license office with a tale of his adventures.

Washington said he was born in Bolobo, Kongo Free State, the only son of Charles A. and Helena Washington, who were doing missionary work among the natives. When he was three years of age, he was stolen from his mother by a cannibal tribe known as the "Madgu-quana." Washington said the cannibals carried him to a distant village, which took several days of traveling through dense forests.

"When I was eight years of age I was made the god of the tribe," said Washington, "and held that position until I was eighteen. During that time I was treated with the greatest respect and honor. When I went before them, decorated with feathers and paint, the natives would fall down before me and offer up sacrifices of wild animals, as homage to me. At no time was I left unguarded."

"After being a god for fifteen years, I was rescued by Doctor W. C. Ferguson, a Methodist missionary of Washington, D. C., who belonged to the same group of missionaries as my parents, and was residing in the same town where I had been kidnaped. On the day I was rescued word came into camp, by one of the cannibals, that a group of white people was in the vicinity. We immediately went out to meet them. As we came upon them, a woman in the crowd refused to flee, but came toward me, I being the leader of the party. She threw her arms about my neck and at that instant my guards killed her."

"That night I was aroused by Doctor Ferguson, who came back to rescue me, having recognized me as the child stolen from Bolobo. After much difficulty we reached Cape Town, South Africa. I was placed in a Catholic missionary college, and after five years, I mastered the English language."

"Not until I left the missionary college did I learn that I had been kidnaped, or that the woman who had thrown her arms about my neck was my mother, who had recognized her son. Doctor Ferguson then took me to Cairo, Egypt, where I completed my education. In company with Doctor Ferguson I traveled through the Holy Land and then came to the United States with my rescuer. After visiting several of the important cities here, I settled in Wheeling. During my education in Cape Town, I took up the study of chemistry, and have followed that ever since."

Sidelights on Great War.

When the call to arms resounds over the land, and the barber, the waiter, the clerk, and the baker leave their tasks to put on the uniform of their country and become man-killers, what emotions grip their hearts, what pictures pass through their brains!

Few men have availed themselves of the present extraordinary opportunity for analytic research. Few have taken the trouble to recall the emotions with which they went to war. One who has done so is a young Austrian lawyer, who has been taken to Vienna from the battlefields of Galicia because he is suffering from a flesh wound.

While lying on his cot he has taken the time to "plot" his feelings in the various experiences through which he passed in the last few months, and here it is, translated almost word for word from the German, in which he told it to a man at his bedside:

"When we were called out about three months ago, I remember distinctly having two ideas concerning the war. First I was filled with great patriotic enthusiasm, with joy that Austria was about to wage war against our old enemy, Russia.

"At the same time I felt a want of confidence in myself. I had been, as it happened, a long time an officer of the reserves, but felt that I was little better than an ordinary civilian and also was the possessor of a delicate taste for the sedentary life. I was a bit afraid of my own ability to accomplish anything, for even if I viewed myself in the most favorable light, it did not occur to me that I had any heroic qualities.

"The trust of the soldiers was a surprise even to myself. I became commander of a body of soldiers of a regiment of the Landsturm, largely men of middle age and fathers of families. The trust of soldiers made me strive to rise to their measure of me."

Find \$2,000 in a Keg.

Relatives of William Taylor, an aged bachelor, whose home was near Florence, Tenn., and who died a few days ago, are searching barrels, boxes, and every conceivable hiding place in the neighborhood of his log cabin in search of the money which he is known to have hidden on the premises.

About \$3,000 has already been found. Over \$2,000 was discovered in a nail keg in the smokehouse. Most of this was paper money and had small holes eaten in it, presumably by crickets. Silver and gold coins were found in a shot sack.

Taylor had on deposit about \$7,000 in different banks. He lived alone on his farm of 108 acres, which he bought, more than thirty years ago, for \$700.

Ravines Choked With Bodies.

The French, having retaken Lesmenils, are digging trenches, setting inclined stakes, laying a network of barbed wire, and building obstacles of trees and branches in order to protect their position. A soldier gave some details of the fighting there.

"I do not ever wish to return there," he said. "The dead bodies were piled so high we had to climb over the heaps. While advancing I stepped on a head which had been separated from the body. The ground was strewn with arms and legs. The ravines were choked with bodies lying in a tangled mass. It was pitiful to hear the wounded crying for water and for their families, especially their mothers. Some of the troops were unmanned by these terrible scenes."

All the factories in the neighborhood of Verdun and Toul are being employed to make war material. Special shell factories have been improvised in other places. Scrap iron from the buildings wrecked by shells is being collected for use in these factories.

Heroes of the Mail Service.

The hardships and dangers that winter brings to Uncle Sam's heroes of the rural-mail service are now in evidence, and were even partial details of thrilling experiences during the recent extraordinary cold spells available, no doubt more than one carrier could justly lay new claim to heroism and genuine American pluck.

One instance of terrible death and awful suffering, in which two rural carriers were the victims, is reported

from Cheboygan, Mich. In this case, where a brave, undaunted pair took every chance when the hand of Christmas spirit pointed the way, both found themselves adrift on an ice floe in Lake Huron, and one was compelled to yield up his life to the call of duty. Nearly dead from exposure and with hands and feet badly frozen, Fred Roberts, thirty-eight years old, a carrier between Cheboygan and Bois-Blanc Island, crawled ashore after drifting twenty-eight hours on an ice floe. The cold weather has caused the death of his companion, Joseph White.

The men with their dog sledges left Bois Blanc Island after delivering the Christmas mail. When halfway across the straits, the ice parted, and they found themselves adrift in Lake Huron. They were shelterless and exposed to the bitter cold all night.

Several times the men and their sledges broke through the ice. White finally succumbed. Roberts, in a last desperate effort, succeeded, with the assistance of the dogs, in reaching shore when the floe neared land, eighteen miles east of Cheboygan.

Five Dead in Florida Fire.

Harry Alvey, his wife, and three children were burned to death when fire destroyed their home near Winter Haven, Fla.

Their charred bodies were found together in the ruins of the children's room. Alvey was a retired Baltimore capitalist.

Joker in the Line.

During night drill in England, a practice message was sent along the line of one of the recruit battalions, being passed in a whisper from man to man. It started from one end: "Enemy advancing on right flank; send reinforcements." And this is how it reached the other end: "Enemy advancing with ham shank; send three and fourpence." The commanding officer was unable to discover the intervening wag.

Ends Fiftieth Year in White House.

White House officials, from President Wilson down, recently celebrated Colonel William H. Crook's fifty years of service at the executive mansion.

Colonel Crook's official title is "chief disbursing officer," but he is more widely known as the "White House Encyclopedia." From Lincoln to Wilson is a good, long stretch of service, and fully half of the White House traditions of to-day are matters of Colonel Crook's experience. And whenever a matter relating to the dim and dusty archives of the White House comes up, Colonel Crook is called upon to throw light upon it.

Colonel Crook has said that he believed that had he been on duty the night Lincoln was shot, the assassination would never have been accomplished. The colonel at the time was a member of President Lincoln's bodyguard, and he had been on duty for twenty-four hours continuously when Lincoln started for Ford's Theater, in Tenth Street, where he was shot.

The colonel says he begged the president to let him accompany him, but Lincoln, with his usual consideration for those around him, remembered that Crook had been on duty for a day and a night, and insisted that another member of the bodyguard accompany the party. The guard, as it appears, allowed himself to become more in-

interested in the performance than in his duty, and Booth was enabled to enter the president's box unobserved and fired the fatal shot.

There is one White House custom that started during the colonel's time which he cannot explain. Last Easter some discussion arose regarding the origin of the egg-rolling custom on the south lawn of the White House. Colonel Crook was appealed to for information, but, much to his chagrin, he had none to offer.

When he was told a story of how Nellie Grant, daughter of President Grant, had been confined to the White House on Easter during the Grant administration, and how the custom started through President Grant inviting the children of Washington to roll their Easter eggs with Nellie on the White House lawn, the colonel merely shook his head.

False to Country and Sweetheart.

It is approximately 5,400 miles from Warsaw, Russia, to Chicago. Benjamin Cohen, aged twenty-six, who lived near Warsaw when orders to mobilize were issued, was willing to make the trip to evade military service.

The problem of avoiding enlistment was solved by his sweetheart, Miss Ida Gordon, twenty-two years old, who obtained a passport for him under an assumed name. She also gave him money for his fare and promised to come to him when he should send for her.

Cohen came to Chicago. He is an expert machinist and had no trouble in getting a job. About three months ago he wrote Miss Gordon to come.

She came, but in the meantime Cohen had noticed the difference between the American girls and those in the little towns of Russia. He had forgotten his love for Ida.

Cohen was not cordial. He obtained lodging for her but asked her if she didn't want to go back to Russia. He said he was making fifty dollars a week and offered to pay her way. He had changed his mind about marrying her, he told her. She wasn't as pretty and didn't dress as well as the American girls.

But Miss Gordon had no intention of traveling 5,400 miles back to Russia alone. She refused to accept the offer.

Her money soon ran out and Cohen refused to give her more. Then she consulted an attorney. The latter filed suit for \$10,000 damages for breach of promise in the circuit court.

"Miss Gordon has no friends, no money, and is about to be evicted from the boarding house," said her attorney.

Hunter Didn't Mean to Do It.

L. D. Isom, of Jefferson City, Mo., a member of the Painted Rock Hunting Club, while hunting in the big-game preserve of the club on the Osage River, saw a wild turkey gobbler in the woods. He fired at it and was, of course, pleased to see that his aim was good. He was both pleased and chagrined when he went to pick up the game to find that he had killed three turkeys with one shot.

It is against the game law for a hunter to kill more than two wild turkeys in one day, so Isom had unwittingly violated the law. He immediately hunted up the deputy game warden, whose home is in the preserve, and confessed.

"I didn't see but one turkey when I shot, and had no intention of killing the other two," said Isom, in ex-

planation to the warden. "It was just an accident that could not be avoided."

Examination of the ground showed that the two turkeys, not seen by Isom, were standing directly in line back of the one he shot at, hence all three of them were killed.

Dog is a Clever Detective.

Frederick Rowland, agent at the union station, Joplin, Mo., owns a dog that is claimed to be the best detector of "bootleggers" in Joplin. A few weeks ago "Sport" walked up to a man who was holding two suit cases and waiting for the Oklahoma train. The dog began sniffing at the suit case, and the man tried to kick him away.

But Sport decided to stay, and began to bark, thus attracting the attention of a policeman. The suit cases were opened and were found to be filled with bottles of liquor. Since then the dog has repeated the stunt many times. He has never made a mistake, consequently he is a great friend of the officers—but not of the bootleggers.

Pastor Offers Divorce Cure.

A set of rules to prevent husband or wife seeking refuge in the divorce court or seeking happiness with a soul mate has been offered in a sermon by the Reverend C. W. Blodgett, pastor of the Clifton Methodist Episcopal Church, at Cincinnati, Ohio.

"Gossip is destructive," he said. "The man who will go about and complain of his wife is a coward. The woman who listens to silly twaddle of busybodies is unfit for home. Not one girl in a thousand is fit to marry under twenty, and no man under twenty-five."

The pastor said every man, before he is married, should be compelled to swear he will stay at home at least two nights every week.

Ranchers Want to See League Games.

Bruning, Neb., population 363, has applied for admission to the Nebraska State Baseball League. The application is backed with coin. In the 363 are rich ranchmen, who have chipped in so the little burg may have real big-town baseball.

Smother Bees for Honey.

Scientific larceny is responsible for the loss of 40,000 honey bees and 100 pounds of honey belonging to George A. Beetem, near Carlisle, Pa. Beetem, as one of the more prominent bee culturists, has acquired distinction, but of late years has had serious mishaps.

Last year thousands of Beetem's bees were killed by feeding in orchards which had been sprayed by State officials. Night before last honey thieves invaded Beetem's yards and burned flour sulphur under the hives, suffocating more than 40,000 bees. Thus, the invaders captured the honey without being stung. A short time ago sixty-seven turkeys in Beetem's yard were poisoned.

White Mice on Submarine Craft.

It is generally known that canary birds are utilized in coal mines to detect the presence of deadly gases, especially by rescue parties exploring wrecked chambers in search of victims of explosions. Some one discovered that the canary—the ordinary little yellow singing bird—was peculiarly susceptible to the effects of this gas, hence their employment for such purposes.

Now we have white mice utilized for a similar purpose. In the submarines, now playing so important a part in naval warfare, a deadly gas is also formed that affects the occupants much as the gas in coal mines affects the miners and rescuers—and is equally difficult of detection. In this case, it has been discovered that the white mice, especially the breed called "dancing mice," that may be seen in any animal dealer's shop, were as susceptible to this deadly gas as the little canaries were to the coal-mine gas. Accordingly, every submarine now carries, as an essential part of its equipment, a cage of these little dancers.

When the boat is running beneath the surface—which is the time and condition when the deadly gas is formed, due to the action of the chemicals used in operating the boat—these little mice are carefully watched. When one of them is overcome, the boat either rises to the surface and pumps in a supply of fresh air or, if that is impossible, oxygen is liberated from the liberal supply of tanks carried on board until the mouse revives. The oxygen is then cut off, for an oversupply of it is likely to work harm among the human beings compelled to breathe it too freely.

Queer Reptile is Captured.

A curious, strange specimen of lizard or scorpion was captured by Walter T. Todd, near the trolley station of the Chambersburg, Greencastle & Waynesboro Street Railway Company, at Highfield, Pa. The reptile, or what not, was about eight inches in length, and the color of brick dust. It was found lying on the ground, only a few feet from the station, and on account of the rain and cool weather, was unable to use its locomotive powers very actively and was easily captured.

The reptile had an elongated body without scales, four short legs, and short tail, and its body was almost as tough as rubber. Where it came from no one seems to know.

Dakota Wants Some Belgians.

North Dakota is seeking a colony of Belgians. It is thought they can be brought here in the spring, and Governor Hanna would like to locate about one hundred heads of families in this State. They would be especially valuable at a time when North Dakota is making an effort at better farming and dairying and live-stock raising.

A representative of the State may be sent to Belgium to interest prospective settlers.

Suspended By Wedding Ring.

Mrs. Rheese Budd, an elderly woman, of Trenton, N. J., was standing on a chair fixing a curtain, when she lost her balance. She threw her hand out to stop the fall and her wedding ring caught over a gas jet. For some time she hung suspended by the ring, but by struggling managed to release herself.

The flesh of the finger was torn completely away and it was amputated at McKinley Hospital.

Wears Diamonds in Her Skin.

One of the chorus girls in "The Débutante," at the Knickerbocker Theater, in New York, has started a fad that may never become popular. She wears a diamond butterfly fastened to her bare shoulder blade. Every night, when the young woman turns her bare back on

the audience, there is a gasp from the front row and a murmur of wonder from the bejeweled ladies in the boxes.

"How does she make it stay on?" they ask each other. And the answer is that surgery accomplished the trick.

A careful little incision was made with a scalpel on the shoulder blade, and a cauterizing instrument was pushed through the two holes to prevent blood poisoning. Every night the butterfly pin is gently inserted and fastened to the other end of the pin. In this way the little chorus girl has succeeded in beating the ladies of the spotlight to a genuine novelty in the way of wearing gems.

Pet Dog Saves Two Women.

The pet dog of Mrs. T. B. Loniger, Olive Avenue, Sacramento, Cal., saved the life of his owner and her mother after they had been overcome by gas fumes from a stove in which lampblack was being burned.

Mrs. Loniger was awakened by the dog jumping on her bed and whining. He then ran into the room where her mother was sleeping. Mrs. Loniger followed and found her mother unconscious on the floor. Mrs. Loniger fell unconscious while trying to revive her mother.

The dog then ran to the room of J. Rice, a cousin, and aroused him. Rice fell from the gas fumes in the room where the women lay, but opened all the doors and windows and called a doctor. The women were revived.

Just Heard of War.

A sailing vessel recently arrived in New York, whose crew did not know there was a war until signaled outside the harbor by a British cruiser. She was the Norwegian bark *Padang*. She left Padang, Sumatra, August 12th, with a cargo of coffee, and the British cruiser was the first vessel she spoke to during her entire passage.

High Rent for Fruit Stand.

What is believed to be one of the most expensive fruit stands in the world has just been contracted for by John D. Antonopoulos, a Greek, who has signed a lease for three years, agreeing to pay \$21,000 rent each year for the privilege of maintaining his stand in the St. George, Staten Island, New York, ferry terminal.

Germans Blown Up by Mine.

French soldiers from the trenches bring more horrible details of the battles in Bois-le-Prete and Bois-de-Montmartre. In the former the Germans were blown up by a mine, and in the latter it was the French who were shattered by subterranean explosions. The soldiers say that the woods are in a terrible condition, the ground being covered with bodies mangled beyond recognition. Arms, legs, and fragments of flesh hang from the branches of the trees and a German head still wearing a spiked helmet grins from a crotch of a tree. Three huge oaks have been reduced to matchwood.



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